

REPORT ON VISIT TO WHEATFIELD PRISON
COMMENCING THE 23rd JUNE 2003 TO 4th July 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 23rd June 2003 to the 4th July 2003 an inspection of Wheatfield Prison was carried out by the Inspectorate Team which consisted of:

Mr. Justice Dermot Kinlen	Inspector of Prisons and Places of Detention
James Woods	Special Advisor Prisons Inspectorate
Martin McCarthy	Prisons Inspectorate
Prof William Binchy	Consultant
Prof Claire Carney	Consultant
Dr. Owen Carey	Consultant
Dr. Paul Ward	Consultant
David O'Mahony	Consultant
Joseph Gannon	Consultant

- 1.2 The purpose of inspection is to identify issues and take note of any areas of concern or good practice which may pertain.

Date:	Mr. Justice Dermot Kinlen Inspector of Prisons and Places of Detention
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2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Wheatfield Prison is located on Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22 on the west side of the city. The site was purchased as a green field area and it accommodated the building of both Wheatfield and Cloverhill Prisons. Wheatfield was the first prison built on the site and it was planned to build a new women's prison on the adjacent site which is now Cloverhill Prison. (A new women's prison was built on the Mountjoy complex on North Circular Road)
- 2.2 Wheatfield was the first purpose built prison since the foundation of the state and it came into operation on its opening in 1989. It is a double storey over basement building with all of its services located in the basement. It consists of 20 units with cell accommodation for 16 prisoners in each unit. Each unit is connected to a long corridor which occupies the centre of the building. The other facilities such as workshops, education unit, administration offices, visiting area, church, reception area, etc are attached to the opposite side of the cell units off the main corridors. There are 3 exercise yards attached to the prison as well as a large sports hall and two gymnasias.
- 2.3 The cells are all fitted with stainless steel toilets and wash hand basins. The water taps on the wash hand basins and the toilet handle for flushing same are of the "push button" type in order to make it difficult to attach a ligature to them. Each cell has a t.v as well as piped radio facility. The cell windows are designed to allow in light without having to have steel bars placed on the outside of them. They consist of three long strips of glass, the outer part of the opening

is narrow while the inner part is wide and covered with stainless steel material which reflects the light into the cell. The outside of the window is sufficiently narrow to prevent a person passing out through it.

- 2.4 The prison was built to accommodate 320 prisoners in single cell accommodation. However, due to overcrowding in the prison system a number of cells at Wheatfield Prison were changed into double cells by placing a bunk bed in them. The prison can now accommodate 378 prisoners. Originally it was used for sentenced prisoners only but in recent times it has changed and is now also accommodating a small number of remand/trial prisoners.
- 2.5 It has very good education plus work training/workshop facilities. The entire flooring throughout the prison is covered with tiles and it is very clean and tidy.
- 2.6 There is a considerable amount of construction work taking place at the prison at present by outside contractors and on entrance it appears like a building site. There is a new laundry being built and additional workshop spaces. There is additional office/administration and locker room facilities being provided.
- 2.7 Each prisoner has access to telephone facilities and all of the other services such as medical, educational, welfare, chaplaincy, etc.

3. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

3.1 Wheatfield Prison was built with a cell capacity of 320 consisting of 20 units of 16 single cells in each unit. However, due to overcrowding in the general prison population, a number of cells at Wheatfield were converted into double cells which raised the accommodation capacity to 378. [Increase of 58 prisoners].

3.2 On the day of our inspection there were 377 prisoners in custody and one prisoner was being detained in an outside hospital being a total of 378.

3.3 372 were serving sentences while 6 were awaiting trial in the courts.

3.4 There were a total of 9 foreign nationals from Great Britain, South Africa, Nigeria, China and Gambia.

3.5 Particulars regarding sentences being served.

21 were serving sentences of up to 12 months

37 were serving sentences of over 12 months and up to 2 years

110 were serving sentences of over two years and up to 4 years

75 were serving sentences of over four years and up to 7 years

78 were serving sentences of over seven years and up to 10 years

22 were serving sentences of more than 10 years

29 were serving sentences of life imprisonment

372 (plus 6 remands = 378)

3.6 The age profile of the prisoners held there were as follows:-

2	were between the ages of 16 and 18 years old
52	were between the ages of 19 and 21 years old
93	were between the ages of 22 and 25 years old
84	were between the ages of 26 and 30 years old
54	were between the ages of 31 and 35 years old
39	were between the ages of 36 and 40 years old
18	were between the ages of 41 and 45 years old
10	were between the ages of 46 and 50 years old
21	were between the ages of 51 and 60 years old
<u>5</u>	were aged 61 years and older
378	Total

Staffing

05	Governor Grade
25	Discipline Supervisory Grade
13	Clerical Grade
13	Trades Officers Grade
16	Industrial Training Instructor/Industrial Supervisor Grade
242	Prison Officer Grade
13	Nurse Officers
<u>02</u>	Chaplains
329	Total

- 3.7 There are a number of other staff involved in the delivery of services to prisoners at Wheatfield but are not “prison grade” staff. Particulars are as follows:-

Education

25 teachers (11 full time and 14 part time)

Medical

- 1 Part time General Practitioner (daily)
- 2 Part time Psychiatrists (5-6 hours per week)
- 1 Part time Dentist (one and half days per week)
- 1 Part time Psychologist (3 days per week)
- 1 Part time Optician (3 visits per month)
- 1 Dietician (when required 1-2 times per year)

Probation and Welfare

- 1 Senior Probation and Welfare Officer
- 4 Probation and Welfare Officers
- 1 Clerical Officer
- 1 Part time Training and Employment Officer (Linkage Officer)

Librarians

- 2 Librarians (Full time)

Counsellors

14 (all part time and mostly involved in A.A and N.A. Counselling) Various others, both individuals and groups give of their time an expertise on a voluntary basis.

4. GOVERNORS BRIEFING

4.1 The Governor's briefing to the Inspectorate was also attended by members of the senior management of Wheatfield Prison.

4.2 Wheatfield Place of Detention was opened on the 8th June, 1989. The building consists of 20 living units that open off main spinal corridor. Each unit has 16 rooms. The original intention was to accommodate 320 prisoners in single cells each with in cell sanitation. Since the late nineties, due to accommodation pressure in the system, bunk beds were placed in a number of cells on each unit making the maximum accommodation 378. The title of Place of Detention has been changed to Wheatfield Prison. This was done in order to accommodate the overflow of remand/trial prisoners from Cloverhill Prison. Up to 12 remand or for trial prisoners are accommodated there at times. These remand/trial prisoners take part in all the activities. There were 377 prisoners in custody plus one prisoner being detained in an outside hospital on that day. One prisoner is permanently accommodated in the Segregation Unit and has been there for over three years, with the exception of a short period in Cork & Mountjoy Prison. He has attended a class in the Education Unit for a short time. He is visited daily by the Governor and Chaplain. There are approximately 70 sex

offenders at present in custody there and there are no specific rehabilitation programmes for sex offenders in place. This situation is being examined at the moment.

- 4.3 There are 2 Drug Free Units, one on 10G for the “Ordinary prisons” and one on 6F for the “Protection prisoners”. The Unit 10G has been in operation for over 12 months. It has been a success in so far as there were very few instances in which prisoners were removed.
- 4.4 All cells have Televisions which has proven to be very beneficial insofar as it has reduced the number of self mutilations, the number of calls for medical assistance during the evening period, and the request for medication. It also allows prisoners keep abreast with developments in the outside.
- 4.5 Prisoners are issued with a telephone card in which they can insert the number of two persons of their choice, they can also have their solicitor’s number on the card. A prisoner can make one call per day of up to 6 minutes duration.
- 4.6 The Total number of Prison Service Staff presently assigned to Wheatfield is 329.
- 4.7 Wheatfield Prison staff and prisoners are proud of their achievements in particular in Catering and Hygiene;

They were awarded the Excellence Ireland Category Award for Hygiene (Best in their class nation-wide and runners up for the Supreme Hygiene award) also the Gilbeys Award for catering.

The Prison achieved the I.S.O. Status standards as well as a major award for general safety (N.I.S.O)

4.8 *The Work & Training Area*

The Design, Joinery, Metal, Painting and Decorating Workshops have been very busily involved in the Designing, Manufacturing & Painting of a considerable amount of items required for the Special Olympics i.e Podiums for various events for the Prize winners, Rostrums, Benches, Jumps and many other items. All of the staff and offenders embraced this project enthusiastically. The Design, Construction, Joinery, Metal, Painting & Decorating workshops staff and prisoners played a big part in the construction of a "New Garden of Friends" which was opened recently at St. Joseph's Hospital in Trim. An Industrial Instructor with 3 offenders released daily for 10 days completed the project to a very high standard. The appreciation by the hospital for the work carried out was marked by a presentation of a painting titled "Wheatfield" to Wheatfield Prison.

- 4.9 A wide range of Work and Training activities are available in Wheatfield Prison, the comprehensive range of Work skill opportunities have resulted in offenders receiving accreditation and certification in several areas including Catering, Welding, Indexing, Bricklaying.

- 4.10 The maintenance of the grounds and gardens is done by 14/15 prisoners under the supervision of an officer.
- 4.11 Multi Disciplinary Approach
A Multi Disciplinary team work approach is encouraged and fostered in Wheatfield Prison in the delivery of services to prisoners. The local review meetings, pre-parole board meetings, drug awareness programme meetings, health care committee meetings, drug free and group skill committee meeting are all of multi-disciplinary staff components.
- 4.12 There is an excellent Education Unit with a very dedicated staff. The prisoners, are encouraged to attend the Education facilities which provide a wide variety of classes. Prisoners have sat this year's Junior & Leaving Certificates exams plus Open University exams with one man achieving a diploma. He is receiving his Diploma in Environmental Studies in the prison and to mark the occasion, members of his family have been invited in for the ceremony.
- 4.13 With the opening of Cloverhill and the Midland Prisons over the last number of years, Wheatfield has suffered the loss of a high percentage of its senior and experienced staff. The Governor outlined that with the loss of staff through promotions and transfer, it is difficult getting replacement staff.
- 4.14 Another cause for concern is the lack of an acceptable level of Psychology Service for the prisoners. There is a considerable number of prisoners who

require Psychological counselling. Unfortunately the service is not in a position to deliver at present.

4.15 The Health Care Unit has expanded considerably in the last two years particularly since the Methadone Maintenance Programme was introduced. There are now 13 Nurse Officers assigned to Wheatfield. There are two maintenance stations in operation, one in the ordinary unit and one in the protection unit. Unfortunately, with this expansion there was no medically qualified manager/supervisor to take charge of the Health Care Unit. The appointment of a suitably qualified person is vital in order to manage, control and be accountable for this area. Recently, two of the nurses assigned were Mental Care Nurses. This is very welcome as “we have in our custody prisoners who require attention and care”. The Governor stated that there is a good rapport between staff and prisoners and this will be experienced on the inspection. There is a mutual respect for each other.

4.16 The Governor states that whilst they have two Drug Free Units, they are not without illegal drugs. Prisoners are regularly found to have received drugs while on visits. Drugs and Alcohol are also smuggled into the prison in a number of different ways. Action is taken by the prison authorities to counteract this practice.

4.17 There is an excellent working relationship with the Probation and Welfare Service, the Chaplains, and Prison Service staff.

4.18 Currently, a new laundry is being built to provide a laundry service to both Cloverhill and Wheatfield Prison. This will replace the old launderette in the prison. The new facility will provide a service in which all prisoners clothes, both their own and prison issue, will be washed.

It will also enable prisoners to have additional changes of underwear issued weekly. The new laundry facility will provide training for the prisoners as they will receive instructions to FAS standards and issued with certification on successful completion of the course. This may assist prisoners to gain access to the laundry industry on their release.

4.19 There is an excellent modern library service provided for the prisoners with a good selection of books, tapes and information booklets. Talks on a variety of interesting subjects are organised which takes place in the library.

4.20 The Governor outlined that the Inspectorate team would see during their inspection the General Office, Personnel Office, General Stores, Maintenance Stores, which provide an excellent administration service. The Governor then introduced his senior management team. There was a useful interchange of ideas.

This concluded the Governor's briefing.

5. TOUR OF INSPECTION OF WHEATFIELD PRISON

5.1 CELL ACCOMMODATION UNITS "G"

The cell accommodation consist of 20 living units which open off a main spinal corridor. Within each unit are sixteen cells. The Inspectorate visited

all the cells in units G1 to G6. Each of the units visited had four cells which were doubled. The six units are identical insofar as they have three showers in each, with stainless steel surroundings, tiled walls and matt coverings on the floors. Each of the cells have a tv, toilet and wash hand basin. The cells that are doubled, have a stainless steel barrier/screen around the toilet area for privacy purposes. There are bunk beds in the cells that are doubled. The top bunks have a steel bar surrounding them which prevents the person using it from falling out, but, the bar could be used to attach a ligature in the event of someone considering suicide. In the double cells there are combined stainless steel lockers and presses. In the single cells there are wooden lockers. There are grids placed on the outside of the cell windows to prevent articles or objects being thrown out. Each of the cells have a call system within them consisting of a press button which registers in the local control "hub" room, located at the unit's entrance door. If not answered there within a specified time, it also displays on a panel in the central control area. Each of the units are self contained. On entrance to each there is quite a large open area in which seating can be placed to view a communal television/video and just off this area there is another room in which a snooker table is placed. There is a very small room off the snooker area which contains a phone for the prisoners' use. There is a double drainer stainless steel sink unit and beside the sink unit, a hot water machine is installed for the prisoners use in the making of tea, coffee etc. Each of the cells have natural light supplied by three long narrow windows. Some of the prisoners have paper covering or pictures placed over the windows which leaves some of the cells quite dark, while others are bright with sun shining

in on the days of the inspection. The cells are all painted a similar colour and are quite hygienic and clean. The ceilings are the only area that could do with a freshening up of paint. Some of them have painted the light coverings in various colours of blue, yellow, etc which gives that colour glow within the cell when the lights are on. There is also an intercom system within the cells and the officer in the local control "hub" room can speak to the prisoner. Each cell is fitted with an in built radio system and the prisoner can select any four ban channels he so wishes by pressing a button. The recreation area, the snooker area, each of the cells and the corridors are all tiled, are clean and hygienic. Each of the units have an officers' control room or hub room immediately at the entrance door. The officer within the control room can observe the movements of the prisoners within the unit as well as observing the movement of the prisoners up and down the spinal corridor. The entire controls of the units are operated from within this control/hub room such as the cell doors are electrically locked, lights are operated, air fan, alarms, display panels, etc, as well as the intercom system. The prisoner in the cell can not talk to the officer within this room, it is only one way from the officers' station to the prisoner's cell. A light on a panel within the hub will also display if a cell or exit door is not properly locked or if a prisoner activates the call button. The officer within this control/hub room can also talk to the officer in charge in the overall console room area. The viewing panels are protected by reinforced glass. There is also a toilet and wash hand basin just off the control/hub room for the officer's use.

5.2 CELL ACCOMMODATION UNITS "G"

The Inspectorate then visited units 7G,8G,9G and 10G. Units 7,8,9G are identical to units G1 to G6 with the same facilities as already described. All of the cells were clean and tidy. Some were better than others but overall were quite good. Again the only area of a drab nature were the ceilings.

The other unit visited was 10G which is a drug free unit. It has sixteen single cells and there are no double cells within this unit. This unit has been fitted with two washing machines and two tumble dryers. The snooker area has a tv and video installed and in the open recreation area there is a tv and a football table game provided. All the cells have stainless steel lockers and the entire unit is noticeably cleaner and tidier than the other units. The prisoners within this area generally operate within themselves although they do associate at work, recreation and education. All the prisoners within the drug free unit sign a contract of understanding that they do not participate in illegal drugs and undertake to give urine samples when requested. If they happen to develop any illness that requires medication they leave the area during the period that the medication is being prescribed and can return on completion of the course. None of the prisoners within the area are on methadone maintenance and they state that they are free of all drugs of any nature.

5.3 GYM

The next facility the inspectorate visited was the Gym which is a large area. It had over 20 prisoners with two gym officers operating within it. It is well

laid out with gym equipment such as step machines, rowing machines, stepper bicycles, multi gym weights which were attached to the walls. There is a changing room just off this area which has eight showers, three toilets, three urinals, three wash hand basins and all of stainless steel material. The staff and prisoners are in gym clothing and at the end of each session, showers are provided. They can take a maximum of 30 prisoners in this gym but they generally average 20 prisoners per session per day. The ceiling is quite low and in hot weather it becomes quite warm but otherwise it is a fine well laid out gym. The officers were singing the praises of this facility apart from the low ceiling.

5.4 SPORTS HALL

The next day the inspectorate visited the sports hall, the entrance of which was from the gym area. It is a very large sports hall with a high ceiling in which prisoners can play indoor football, basketball, badminton, aerobics, volleyball, soccer, tennis, hockey with plastic sticks and also yoga. Outside football teams are invited in and play the prisoners in various matches. They also have had coaching courses carried out by representatives of the FAI, the GAA, Badminton and Tennis Ireland. They all have given of their time free to come in and give instructions to prisoners, which was organised by the gym officers. They play football in the exercise yard and in the event of it raining the football match can be continued indoors within this fine sports hall. It is a wonderful amenity, very well kept and a great facility to have attached to any prison or institution.

5.5 CELL ACCOMMODATION UNITS "F"

The Inspectorate continued by moving to the next floor level which is known as Floor F and visited units F1, F2, F3, F4, F5 which are similar to the ones on the ground floor level insofar as each of them have four double cells and twelve single cells. They are all laid out identical to the units described on G1 to G6 and with the same facilities. The overall areas were clean and tidy. The cells were the same as on the ground floor area, some were much brighter than others as some of the prisoners have put posters over the windows which darken them considerably. The ceilings of the cells are in need of repainting which may be difficult as an officer stated that they are made of stippling material. Large stippling requires to be sprayed rather than painted, which causes some difficulties. The communal areas, the showers, the corridors which are all tiled were all clean and tidy.

In 6F, which was the final inspection of the day, is a drug free unit and again it accommodates 16 prisoners. There is no doubling of the cells in this unit and again it is similar to the other drug free unit (10G) already described with the exact same facilities and conditions. They sign a contract on entering into the area that they are agreeable to give urine samples and undertake that they will not participate in illegal drugs, and if they are discovered to have had dirty samples, they are removed from the unit.

The next day the Inspectorate team visited the last four of the cellular accommodation which were units 7F, 8F, 9F, 10F. Each of the four units are similar insofar as they have two cells with double beds and fourteen cells

with single beds. They are laid out in the same fashion as all of the other units. On entrance there is the open recreation area with communal television, off that, is the area with the snooker table. There is a small office off the snooker area with a telephone for the prisoners use. There are three showers in each of the units, each of which were in reasonably good condition. In one of the showers (in 9F) there was a broken pane of glass which needs repairing. The hygiene wasn't as good as in some of the other units. The walls were marked and needed to be touched up with paint. Overall the hygiene level was quite okay.

5.6 COMPUTER WORK TRAINING SHOP

The next visit brought us into the work and training area known as Unit 4. The first shop visited was the computer training shop which had three prisoners working there at the time of our inspection. The officer in charge informed us that he has an average of eight prisoners per day working within the area. In order to work in this area, a prisoner has to complete a simple reading test, and interview. If found suitable, he is then accepted into the area. Computer instruction is given to the prisoners at a pace that the prisoners can receive the knowledge and on reaching a level of twenty five words per minute, they then sit a type quick examination. If they are successful they are then given a local cert.

They are now in the process of proceeding to do the ECDL level of computers. This leads them into operating microsoft and also allows them into exploring the internet facilities. There are programmes built into the

computer which has a discovery aspect to them such as Britannia, etc and the prisoners can go into it to explore their tastes and select what is most interesting to them. It is controlled by a password so they have limited access to the full internet system. Both officer instructors operating within this area have completed their ECDL training programme in Beladd House in Portlaoise. It is their ambition to extend the ECDL training programme to most of the prisoners within the workshop as at the present time it is only those that are quite competent that reach that level.

5.7 PRINT SHOP

The Inspectorate team next visited the printing unit where the majority of prisoners working within this area are from the segregated section of the prison. There is an average of 7 to 10 prisoners per day working in the area although they are assigned 15 prisoners to work there. There is always a turnover of prisoners with various ones attending education, going to work elsewhere or on visits etc. All trainees are given a simple test in reading on commencement. They begin by learning the simple computer skills and according as they progress they move along to the various machines within the area. The type of equipment which they operate consists of tape making machine, printer, binder, puncher, guillotine machine, a collator, stitch, staple and perforation machine. They also have a riosgraph machine which scans already printed material and produces it in page format. The page is then printed off to the quantities required. Some of the trainees within this printing unit are achieving the City and Guilds external examinations. They also hold, as in the computer unit, the in-house type

quick examination. The ECDL standard was introduced into the area in 2002 and it is planned to expand and develop it further.

They do a considerable amount of print work for some of the other prisons, also for the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform as well as some work for the Prison Service Headquarters in Monastery Road in Clondalkin. They also do some work for charitable organisations and produce the local Wheatfield in-house magazine. While we were there the prisoners were quite busy and they all appeared to be happy with the type of work and were very satisfied with the final outcome especially for the charitable organisations.

5.8 PC UNIT/COMPUTER WORKSHOP

The team visited the computer workshop which has an average of eight prisoners working in it per day. There is a pool of 16 to 18 prisoners assigned to this area but with education and other activities in the prison the average number of prisoners on a daily basis is eight. They are assessed on entering to see if they have basic reading and writing skills. On gaining experience they then sit the examination of type quick which is arranged by the instructor within it. The City and Guilds certificates were introduced into the area during 2002. The instructor has completed both the ECDL and the ECDL trainer assessment programme which means that she can carry out assessments within the other computer shop plus the education unit if required. Some of the teachers from the education unit can also act as the trainer assessor in this shop. They assist in the production of the Wheatfield

monthly magazine and they feel it was a great achievement to have introduced the City and Guilds examination standards into the area during the year.

5.9 THE INDEXING UNIT

An average of 10 prisoners per day operate within this unit and the prisoners are from both the segregated and unsegregated areas of the prison. The work consists mainly of indexing and computerising old school registers when the schools send in the register for computerisation. They take the names from the registrar and place them on cards. The cards with names thereon are then transferred onto the computer which has to be checked for accuracy. The computer printout is then finally cross checked by the librarian staff. The work carried out in this area has been found to be very satisfactory for quite a number of schools and they have numerous letters of acknowledgements on how well the jobs have been done. The prisoners working on this unit are assessed for certification based on attendance, interest, production, and merit. Certificates are awarded through the Dublin Public Libraries which include computerised and manual indexing, type quick merit and overall achievement. Each year the index unit arranges at least one major presentation ceremony to a school involved in the indexing programme. Several prisoners have been placed on external indexing projects. The indexing unit also receives a considerable amount of queries from past pupils of some of these schools and such information is processed and passed on as required. Some of the school registers date as far back as 1837/1838. The registers that they are presently working on

date from the 1970's. The few prisoners that we spoke to stated that they found the work quite interesting and at times they come across names and schools that they recognise within the Dublin area which adds to the interest within that particular workshop area.

5.10 CONSTRUCTION UNIT/WORKSHOP

On the visit to this area there were 22 prisoners working within the inside and outside workshop and they can have up to 30 prisoners at a time working in this area. They build mock houses or frames of houses, walls, pillars, arches, fireplaces etc. They use sand and lime and on completion of the work it is then knocked down, the bricks are cleaned off and are reused again. Fas, City and Guilds of London junior and senior trades courses are available within this area and three of the prisoners achieved the City and Guilds exams this year. As well as building walls pillars etc some of the prisoners are engaged in making garden slabs and fancy bricks. The ingredients, the quantity and the mixture required is set out for them. They place the mix in special frames that operate on a moveable table and the slabs are then left out to dry. There was a garden display/training area attached to this workshop but it is no longer in use as a new building is being erected in the area once used as the training garden. They hope to have this back again on completion of the building. It entailed training the prisoners in putting down pavement walkways through grassed areas and displaying how gardens could be laid out. This unit also provides some of the materials for the charity project work that is done by the prison as well as doing whatever building requirements that is needed for the projects.

They have also completed a range of works such as water features, paving, garden walks, etc for outside charities as well as for the prison itself. They also completed the new garden machinery storage house and office at the rear of the handball alley attached to the prison. The prisoners who work here are from the non segregated area of the prison. The training instructor has successfully completed his Diploma year in further education.

5.11 THE JOINERY UNIT

There were fourteen prisoners working within this area when the Inspectorate visited and the instructor informed us that 16 is the daily average. The prisoners within this area come mostly from the segregated section of the prison. Most of the training and work carried out is done for charitable organisations and a considerable amount of work was done for the Special Olympics. They made the support stands for the jumps in the Equestrians section as well as special stands for the Olympians to mount the horses, the medal presentation podiums, the observation towers for referees at the games, etc. The work also consists of making rocking horses, harps, lamps, fruit bowls, head and side boards for beds, garden seats, garden furniture. The area has been assessed and passed for City and Guilds standard certification and it is planned to introduce this next year. They operate as part of a team with the other workshops in carrying out the carpentry end of the work on projects for charitable organisations, such as childrens playgrounds, recreation and activity areas for special schools and special hospitals. The work done here appears to be of a very high standard but the end product has to be transferred to another shop for varnishing and

polishing due to the dust levels in this area. It would be difficult to achieve such finish within this workshop due to the space available, the dust level, and the drying facilities. The overall workshop is quite cramped and it would help if an expansion was carried out. It is hoped this will be achieved in the next few years if the necessary finance is made available. They try to complete at least one major external project per year. The garden at Trim hospital and the equipment for the Special Olympics was their achievement for this year.

5.12 METAL/WELDING SHOP

The Inspectorate team were informed that an average of 15 prisoners per day work within this unit and the core of the prisoners are from the segregated section of the prison. The work consists of making various gates, grids, screens, etc both for the prison and also for charitable organisations. This shop along with the joinery and construction shop, work hand in hand with each other in providing the necessities of a project for charitable organisations. The officer in charge outlined plans where the shop is going to be expanded with the building of the new laundry and workshop area. The end wall is going to be removed and expanded out into the newly constructed area. Both staff and prisoners were looking forward to the expansion within their work area as it will allow for greater flexibility of work being done. He also hopes to build a bay that will enable him introduce a new type of work into the area which is working on motor bike engines. They will also be able to extend out the welding bays and the cutting areas where sparks, etc, are generated from operating the equipment. This welding

unit offers a certification programme for a wide range of gas and electric welding techniques, (NTD). As well as providing training in welding techniques it also provides a fabrication service for the institution, along with making various toys and equipment for charitable organisations.

Some of the prisoners who have passed through this work unit have taken up programmes with FAS on leaving the prison while others have become involved with community assistance programmes and community youth training programmes. Some others went on to develop careers in the welding industry and at the car valeting industry. Both of the training instructors completed their final year of the degree programme in training and further education. The officer in charge felt that the prisoners who take on this work and complete it to a high standard should get rewarded by giving them an additional financial bonus similar to what is happening in other prisons. The local management does not agree with the officers views concerning extra rewards for prisoners for working in the workshops.

The Inspector revisited the metal/welding shop and was very interested in hearing of the proposed new adventure into the stripping down and rebuilding of motorcycle engines. The Inspector was very supportive of the person in charge in his new adventure and raised the question of extending this instruction to motor car maintenance. He outlined his experience of a motor mechanical shop in St. Patrick's Institution, when he was a member of the V.C, and driving instructions given to the young offenders at the time. He would be very supportive of a similar type driving school being set up in

Wheatfield and indeed in the other large prisons. The Inspector feels that nowadays it is an important part of any young persons education.

5.13 DESIGN UNIT

On the day of our visit to the design unit there were four prisoners working within the area and the officer in charge told us that there is an average of five to six prisoners per day working within it. The maximum he can take is seven. The majority who work within this area are from the segregated section of the prison. The design unit is largely responsible for the design, work and layout for all the community assistance programmes. It is responsible for the production of the drawings for the Wheatfield Fire and Emergency Plans and for drawing specifications for some of the alterations to Wheatfield Prison itself. The work entails a lot of technical drawing and it also involves the preparing and reading of plans. They plan to bring this unit to City and Guilds and FAS standards and to have those standards implemented in the coming year. The training instructor has completed the degree year of his training and further education programme. He has also successfully completed the ECDL programme. Their work interacts from time to time with educational classes particularly the ones related to technical drawing.

5.14 PAINTING AND DECORATING UNIT

The Inspectorate visited the paint unit and met the officer in charge. He outlined that they had twelve ordinary prisoners working within the area. He also outlined that a lot of the prisoners do not want to work there as they

prefer to work in some of the other shops and his shop is seen as the last resort. The prisoners working in this area are described by management as the most difficult prisoners within the institution and some of them are on methadone maintenance programmes. The shop itself is designed with cubicles down both side walls and on the prisoners first arrival they are assigned one cubicle per person. They start off with basic instructions and with one colour brush and roller. On gaining experience within this area they then pass on to painting wood and wood grain on the floors, and from that they progress to doing sponge painting. They then will undertake to paint doors, varnish and stain them. The officer in charge stated that he found quite a number of them were colour blind which is another difficulty for them in distinguishing the various colours of paint.

There were twelve prisoners working in it on the inspection day. Their daily average is twelve to fifteen prisoners and the maximum he can take within it is sixteen. He did try wallpapering instruction some time ago, but he had to give it up as there was a lot of wastage involved and a lot of the prisoners had absolutely no interest in doing it.

A lot of the work comes from some of the other shops particularly the wood unit shop where they put the finishing paint work to some of the work which is completed there. There had two sets of gates which had come from the joinery metal shop which also had to be painted. So they do quite a bit of work for the prison itself. They are also conscious of the type of paint used

and of late times they had to discontinue using the French polish as it was highly flammable and being used for the wrong purpose.

The man in charge outlined that they were moving into a new paint workshop shortly which is over the new laundry that is being built. He understands that the new area will not be as large as his present one. However, he might get a different category of prisoner as the ones he has at the present time are from the ordinary section. He would be quite happy to have a mixed group, i.e those from the segregated area as well as those from ordinary side because they may have more interest in this type of work.

They have done a considerable amount of work for the Special Olympics in painting the stands, poles, etc for the equestrian section and the judging area. He states that he has six or seven very good painters at the present time but the rest of them are very average and some of them are just there to spend their time with absolutely no interest in it.

5.15 LAUNDRY

The next area visited by the Inspectorate was the laundry which had four prisoners working in it at the time of our visit. It takes an average of five prisoners daily. There were four washing machines and two large dryers both of them of the commercial size and were in operation while we were there. They launder the entire clothing and laundry needs of the prison. Bed clothing, towels, tea towels, jeans, jumpers, socks, overalls, duvets, underwear and shorts. The prisoners who wear their own clothes send their

laundry out with their relatives or friends to have it laundered. There is no personal tagging of laundry so they just come into the reception area and change their laundry and it is put into a basket. The basketfuls of dirty laundry is then put into the washers, so, they don't necessarily get the same laundry back the next week. There is a new laundry being built which will accommodate the laundry needs of both Wheatfield and Cloverhill in the near future. The officer in charge and the prisoners said that they were looking forward to the additional space and work area as what they have there is quite small. It was hygienically clean, tidy and it was a typically good working laundry. There appeared to be a good rapport between the staff and prisoners within this area.

5.16 THE RECEPTION

The reception area is where all of the prisoners of the prison are received, processed and accommodated back into the cellular accommodation. It also works vice-versa. Prisoners that are leaving the prison are brought to reception and put into their civilian clothing and passed along the system and eventually discharged out the gate. When the personal clothing is taken from the prisoners on committal it is then placed in lockers and there are sufficient lockers to allocate one each. They also make up the change of laundered clothing for the prisoners each week. They complete four units per day, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. The work consists of making up sheets, pillow cases, towels, bath towels, etc. They also give out toothpaste, soap, razors, once per month and have one prisoner working

within the area. On average, eight to ten prisoners per day pass through the reception area.

All their property is computerised but unfortunately the programme is not fast enough to cope with the flow of prisoners through the area. They still operate on card index system and then when the rush period is over they then transfer the information on the card system onto the computer system. Prisoner records are on the prison computer information system and if a prisoner is transferred from another prison the information is received on the computer in the general office. The computer in the reception can then get the particulars from the computer in the general office with photograph, discharge dates, sentence, etc on same.

A considerable amount of the staffs' work within the reception area is taken up with prisoners who are wearing their own clothes. They exchange the clothes each week which entails coming to the reception, changing from the clothes they are wearing into fresh clothes and then having the other clothes sent out. The clothing in exchange for the clean clothing coming in, is tagged, brought to the ground floor storage room where the visitors collect the bag of clothes for laundering. They sign for same in duplicate, one of the dockets is left at the main gate, and the other docket is returned back to the reception area. The itemised laundry coming in and going out is computerised which is time consuming.

There is a new laundry being built adjacent to the reception area and the staff think that the new laundry will do away with the private clothing coming and going which should ease their workload considerably. The reception section has five cubicles for changing and has a bathroom, five showers, two toilets, three urinals, and wash hand basins.

The committal reception desk area is where the particulars of the prisoners are taken on arrival. At reception they also sign an application form for the use of the telephone. They are asked if they have any other outstanding court cases or if they have ever attempted suicide. They also sign a contract for the television rental within their cells and agree to a deduction of a sum of €5 per month for same. The conditions and regulations concerning the use of the television and the telephone are outlined to them and they sign a form acknowledging having been informed of same. When these forms are completed by the prisoner they are then returned to the general office. They are recorded on computer there and then a telephone and t.v card is issued.

The ground floor area of the reception has a toilet, three holding cells, two of which are quite large, where they can hold both segregated and ordinary prisoners that are coming or going each day. All of the cell areas are in need of painting and cleaning. Apart from the holding cells, the rest of the reception both upstairs and downstairs was clean and hygienically kept.

5.17 SEGREGATION UNIT

The Inspectorate then visited the segregation unit which is off the main spinal corridor of the prison and isolated from all the other cellular accommodation. It consists of two segregated cells and one padded cell. Within the segregated cells there is a toilet, sink and wash hand basin. The padded cell has no toilet or wash hand basin facilities but immediately outside the door there is a toilet and a shower area. There are call buttons in all the cells and the two segregated cells also have piped radio as per all the other cells within the prison. There is also a shower on the corridor outside of the segregated cell doors with wash hand basin.

On going down the set of stairs in the segregated area leads out to an exercise yard which has two toilets within it. It is quite small with wire along the top of the wall. The area was clean and tidy and there was one prisoner held there at the time of the inspection. The records within the committal book examined, show that on average one prisoner per day is placed within the segregated area. Some were only there for a very short period of one or two hours while others spent the day within it. A prisoner who is held in the segregation unit for a day or more is not removed out unless he is approved for the transfer by the doctor or psychiatrist.

5.18 GARDENS/GROUNDS

The Inspectorate then visited the grounds and garden area attached to the prison. There are several flower beds between the units and these were being looked after by eight prisoners on the day of our inspection. There is

normally ten prisoners working within this area but two of them were on visits. They also cut the grass as well as doing the general cleaning around the entire grounds. At the rear of the prison there is a new garden shed and a small office within it which was erected entirely by the instructor and prisoners from the workshops. It is a first class facility for the use of storage of all of the garden and grounds equipment such as the tractor, trailer, mowers, wheel barrows etc.

The garden area was the next location visited and it consisted of a greenhouse which grows flowers, tomatoes, etc and its heating is thermostatically controlled. One of the teachers instructs two days per week within this area and when he brings his class of prisoners from the education area they must come through an exercise yard in order to gain access to the garden centre. There is quite an extensive vegetable area with broccoli, parsley, carrots, peas, lettuce, onions, shallots, celery, garlic, swedes, spinach, beetroot, peas, strawberries, potatoes, red cabbage, cauliflower, rhubarb, asparagus, watermelon, herbs, radish's, blackcurrent, parsley and dill plus other items grown within it. Around the border of the vegetable garden there are flowers and shrubs and the whole area is quiet and peaceful. It is a beautiful setting for prisoners and staff to work in. The gable wall adjacent to the garden centre has a number of hanging baskets attached to it which are overflowing with flowers and certainly gives a great view of the whole area. There are also half barrels of flowers placed along the driveway and each of them are in full bloom at the present time which is very pleasant and beautiful. There is a considerable amount of work

involved in it. The prisoners appeared to be very happy working there as it is very therapeutic type of work for the prisoners and staff alike.

5.19 CONSOLE ROOM

This is the control area for the prison. The monitors here cover the entire CCTV system which is inclusive of the visits and visiting areas. It is also the control location for all the “walkie/talkie” radios that the officers are issued. This centre operates the controls of the radios in the cells. The prisoners within the cells can talk to the person in the control room and vice-a-versa. All of the fire alarms, breakglass alarms and their locations are displayed on panels there. There is a toilet, wash hand basin, shower and a small tea room within the general area and it is normally staffed by an ACO plus a number of officers. The area was clean and tidy.

5.20 STORES

The general stores caters for the needs of the prison in regard to the requirements of bedding, equipment, cleaning material, delph, tv's, gym equipment, recreation requirements, the victualling requirements, as well as the officers uniforms, shoes, shirts, etc. The new oracle financial computer programmes are in operation here and on questioning the staff working there they stated that they operate both the ledger and the computer as the computer is too slow for the demands that is placed upon it. They also state that they have a considerable amount of problems with the computers breaking down and are out of action quite regularly. The financial systems programme within the computer is also available to the finance section in the

Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform in Killarney as well as in the Prison Service Headquarters in Clondalkin. The staff in the stores considers it is of better use to the staff in Headquarters, and in Killarney, than it is for the people on the ground because of the duplication of the work and the slowness of the programme. During peak pressure times at the prison there is no alternative but to place the transactions on a demand ledger and when the rush slackens the contents of the ledger is placed on computer. This increases the work rather than reducing it.

The Inspectorate then inspected the dry store facilities which include the fridges and the storage of cereals, milk, butter, meat, bread, etc. There are free standing shelving in the centre of the store area which contain non perishable items and all of the areas are kept very clean and tidy. Both the dry food and the food that is stored in the fridges are assessed and inspected regularly by inspectors from outside organisations in relation to the hygiene awards that has been granted to the kitchen over the years. These inspectors arrive unannounced and carry out their spot checks re hygiene, temperature of fridges, storage of meat, labelling, records, and overall neatness and cleanliness. Overall the Inspectorate found the stores to be very clean, tidy and well laid out. It is a pity that the new financial computer systems are not working better.

5.21 GENERAL OFFICE

The Inspectorate visited the general office where there are six clerical staff working. The work of the office is divided into two section one is the general

office requirements where they deal with queries from the public and other government agencies concerning prisoners, courts, escorts, hospital appointments as well as dealing with local prison matters such as prisoners cash and gratuity accounts, court applications, transfers, calculation of sentences, discharges, and committals etc. The other section of the office deals with personnel matters such as staff files and records, pay, records of sick and special leave, probationary reports, pay and allowances, submission to finance section, competitions, freedom of information requests, tuck shop and general prison accounts, etc.

The computers within the office were been fully operated and the staff stated that they found them very good. The office was well laid out open plan style with various free standing barriers protecting off various areas. It was clean and tidy, there appeared to be a good working relationship among the staff and the impression of a good working office.

5.22 TRAINING KITCHEN AND PRODUCTION KITCHEN

- (a) The training kitchen and the production kitchen are located side by side and compliment each other. The Inspectorate team first visited the training kitchen which normally has six prisoners assigned to it, however, on the day of our inspection, one prisoner was operating along with the officer in charge. All the prisoners are checked and passed by the doctor before being assigned to the kitchen area and the majority of the prisoners in the production kitchen would have started off first in the training kitchen. While the kitchen is relatively small, nevertheless, it is well laid out with cookers, ovens and all the necessary equipment for the running of a normal kitchen.

All of the equipment is of stainless steel material and is spotlessly clean and very hygienically operated. On entering the training kitchen, the prisoners are first assigned a basic food hygiene course as well as a personal hygienic course which is the normal Eastern Health Board standard three day hygiene course. All of the prisoners must complete this course. They can then be placed on the Leonardo Training Course which consists of sixteen weeks training. It is similar to a first year course with CERT of FETAC standards. The officer in charge takes six prisoners on each of the courses. The training kitchen makes the Christmas puddings and Christmas cakes as well as catering for other functions within the prison such as presentation awards and such like. The prisoners are also trained in the HACCP programme which entails recording everything that is done within the kitchen, recording all of the storage, for tracking reasons and ensuring established standards in the prevention of cross contamination are maintained. It is also a tracing record of who did what work on a particular meal or on a particular day. Generally, on completion of the training time within the training kitchen the prisoners will then pass on to the production kitchen which is responsible for the daily meals for all the prisoners in custody.

- (b) The Inspectorate then entered the main production kitchen where fish, chips and peas was on that day's menu. It is quite a large kitchen with the cooking area in the centre of the floor, and shelves plus storage presses set around the walls. There are also a number of bins at the end of the kitchen for holding dry foods such as flour, meal, cornflakes, etc. The walls are covered

in white rock material, all the floors are tiled and all the equipment is of stainless steel material. It was spotlessly clean and clinically hygienic throughout.

The various work tasks and areas within the kitchen are divided up among staff and prisoners and rotate on a monthly basis. For instance the cooking area comprises of two prisoners and one officer in charge, the preparation area comprises of three prisoners and one officer in charge. The dishwashing and food trolley areas have two prisoners and one officer while in the decanting area/food serving area on the ground floor has two prisoners with one officer in charge. The prisoners within the units come with their trays to the servery area, collect their meals there, and return back to their units. However, in the case of some prisoners who are on protection and cannot mix with the other prisoners, their food is brought in a hot food trolley to the unit where they are detained and served there. Approximately 50 prisoners fall into this category on both floor levels.

- (c) There is a 28 day menu cycle in operation which is under review at the present time and maybe changed within the next few months. They also cater for over 50 prisoners who have different type of dietary requirements such as, vegetarian, low fats, diabetics, soft diets, those who cannot eat pork etc. Halal meat is also available on religious grounds for those prisoners who require it.

- (d) The prisoners who enter the production kitchen without coming from the training kitchen have to undergo the same EHB three day hygiene course which is the national certificate in principles and practices of food hygiene. They also have to be passed by the doctor before they can take up any work within the kitchen area.
- (e) There is a considerable amount of record keeping in place where each officer responsible for particular areas and prisoners have a check list of jobs to be performed. In the afternoon, each of these sheets are given to the officer in charge. He checks the sheets and rechecks the areas to ensure that the check list corresponds to the work carried out. There is also a constant check list in relation to the temperatures in cooking, storage and fridge areas. This is to ensure that the food is cooked to the required standards and that the fridges and materials stored within them are at the correct temperature. Records are kept of the staff and prisoners working in the particular areas as well as the hours the prisoners have been assigned to the area. Dangerous knives are kept in a steel safe type box and are checked almost hourly and finally checked at the end of the day to ensure that none are missing. The stainless steel containers which hold the cooked meals at the serving area is also temperature controlled and recorded. They also have what's known as "the taste panel" where the prisoners working within the main production kitchen partake of the meals and they are asked for their comments at the end of the meal as to its presentation, taste, etc.

- (f) The various areas were laid out with a lot of signs reading “slippery floor”, “remember wash your hands” first aid kits, etc. There are staff and prisoner toilets with wash hand basins just off the main kitchen area. There is also a room provided for prisoners who smoke. There is an area provided with a table and chairs for the prisoners who work in the kitchen to have their meals. Another section of the kitchen is known as the cooling down area where some food is cooked the previous evening, left to cool and then added to the next day such as desserts.
- (g) There is a corridor at the rear of the kitchen where rubbish bins are stored and are removed or emptied three times per day. The cardboard material is recycled and has a separate recycling bin. In another corridor area off the kitchen there is a laundry where all the prisoners’ white coats, overalls, and caps are laundered each day. There is a washing and drying machine installed along with ironing facilities which a prisoner operates and prepares the clean whites for each day’s use. Each prisoner has a locker and is responsible for their own whites. They must also change their shoes and wear the kitchen supply shoes which have special features in order to comply with health and safety regulations.
- (h) A stairway at the rear of the kitchen leads to the ground floor level the section known as the decanting, storage, and servery area. In the storage area bread and buns are held there, which are baked in the bakery at Mountjoy Prison. There are a number of cold rooms within this area which contain fruit, beans, peas, meat, milk, butter etc. The dry food store

contained canned vegetables and fruit and had sticker identification labels on the cans. The labels contained the date it came in, so as to ensure that there is a turn over and none of the cans are left too long within storage. The policy is first can in first can out. There are also packages of cereals “made up” within this area and sent around to the different units for the prisoners breakfasts. They are also given a made up bag at tea time which consists of fruit, orange juice, a carton of milk and a yoghurt which they bring to their cell and use whenever they feel like it. The food for the servery area comes down in stainless steel containers by lift from the production kitchen overhead. It is stored in the servery areas hot stainless steel containers for distribution.

- (i) All of the washing and cleaning materials such as mops, brushes, etc are stored here. They are all colour coded for the purpose of hygiene standards, for example, green mops are only used in the toilet areas, the yellow mops and buckets are only used in the general area and the blue only used in the refrigerated areas. This is to ensure that none of these areas are crossed over with different mops or cleaning equipment to avoid contamination.
- (j) Both the production kitchen and the training kitchen have received a lot of achievements/awards over the last number of years. They have just been successfully audited for the 10th successive year for hygiene standards. They have achieved independent awards which include the Excellent Ireland Hygiene Award which they have won since 1992, the Excellence Ireland category award best in their class country wide for the past two years, the

Hygiene Person of the Year Award and the National Supreme Award for Hygiene plus the Gilbey Award for Catering Excellence in 2003. So this is a wonderful achievement to have held such high standards over so many years. The inspection team were very impressed with the layout of the kitchens, the hygiene qualities, the hygiene standards in storage, the rapport that was taking place between the prisoners and the officers concerned. The whole management of the catering aspects of the institution is a credit to all concerned.

5.23 GYMNASIUM NUMBER TWO AND EXERCISE YARD

In one of the exercise yards, a small prefab unit was installed in order to give the prisoners on protection access to a gym. On our visit there were eleven prisoners fully occupied on the various machines, weights, press ups, etc with two officers in charge. The room was well laid out with weight machines, multi gym pilates which is a large ball type article, bicycle, thread mills, leg strengthening machine, etc. The room is quite small for the numbers using it. However, it is a facility for those who cannot mix with the general prison population.

The exercise yard is a reasonable size although it is the smaller of the three exercise yards attached to the prison. We examined the toilets therein and both toilets were hygienically kept clean and tidy.

5.24 TUCK SHOP

There are two serving hatches at the shop one for staff and one for prisoners. There are no monetary exchanges for prisoners and all transactions and purchases are done by credit transfer controlled by the General Office.

The shop is operated by prison officers and is open from 8am to 8pm.

There are no glass or tinned items available to prisoners and the purchase of razors is controlled through the officer in charge.

The Tuck shop is bright, clean and hygienically presented. It is very well stocked and provides a service which is in great demand by the prisoners.

5.25 STAFF RESTAURANT/CANTEEN

The staff canteen is operated by an outside caterer. The opening hours are as follows

8 am to 10am - Breakfast

12md to 2pm - Lunch

4pm to 5pm - Tea

The catering staff say there are approximately 100 per sitting. On the day of inspection there were three vending machines, two of which were supplying soft drinks while the 3rd one was supplying snack foods. One of the soft-drink machines was out of order and the other one was empty as was the snack food machine. The responsibility for the stocking of these machines is apparently the caterers. We looked at the kitchen, the food

preparation, serving areas, the dry food storage facilities, fridges, freezers, etc and found all these areas to be in a very good state of presentation. Appropriate records are also kept by the catering staff.

The Inspector accompanied by one of his staff and by the liaison officer from Wheatfield prison sampled three different main courses from the menu. All three courses were of a very poor quality and had possibly been lying for a considerable amount of time. The tables and chairs in the dining room were adequate but there seemed to be a low level of cleanliness in this area. Cobwebs were clearly visible at the top of the walls where they meet the ceilings and in corners.

The inspection of the toilets both male and female revealed a low level of hygiene and cleanliness. The male toilet was worse than the female. There was a toilet seat in at least one cubicle missing and some of the soap dispensers were either broken or missing.

A lot needs to be done to improve the quality of the service provided.

5.26 STAFF LOCKER-ROOMS

Both the male and female locker-rooms were most impressive. They are relatively new and are designed to a good standard. On the day inspection which was unannounced to the officers, the Inspectorate, on examination of both areas found them to be in a high standard of presentation and cleanliness.

Each officer has 1 locker allocated with the exception of kitchen staff who have 2 lockers, one of which is for the use of kitchen uniform (whites).

The female area has 4 shower cubicles with doors, 4 toilet unit's, 4 wash hand basins and hand dryers, a restroom with TV and tea and coffee-making facilities. The female officers between them take responsibility for the cleaning and upkeep of their locker-room.

The male area is much larger (obviously more male officers than female). There are eight shower units with doors of which 2 are power showers. Six toilet cubicles, six urinals, seven wash hand basins, and dryers. The cleaning of the male locker-rooms is carried out by the prison cleaning squad under the supervision of a prison officer.

There is a separate locker-room in a different part of the prison for the use of the chief officers and the assistant chief officers. This room is also used by some kitchen staff. Again this area was extremely clean and well presented. There is sufficient availability of showers, toilets, urinals, wash hand basins and dryers. The cleaning of this area is also carried out by the prison cleaning squad under the supervision of a prison officer.

5.27 VISITORS WAITING AREA

There are two officers in charge of this area who are engaged in the processing of prisoners' visitors. The process of visits at present is on a docket and ledger system. They are waiting for the installation of a

computer system and expect this to happen soon. The computer in fact is installed in their office and just requires connection.

In the actual waiting area there are two vending machines which are supplied by an outside contractor. There is ample seating available but its standard is poor. The officer in charge informed the Inspectorate that new seating is ordered and is to be supplied soon. There is a room marked nursery for the use of visitors with babies or young children for nappy-changing etc. There is a ladies and gents toilet and an invalid toilet. On the day of our inspection the gents toilet was out of order due to a water leak from the roof. The invalid toilet was in use for gents. There is a separate room for the storage of prams buggies etc.

The officers were very happy with their working environment and had no complaints. In addition to their work in the processing of visitors they also deal with incoming property and money for the prisoners.

A number of the prisoners visitors' who were interviewed by the Inspectorate had great praise for the staff. They said they were very courteous, helpful and polite. They did complain about the poor seating (soon to be changed) and that the place could be painted and freshened with brighter colours.

5.28 VISITS AREA

There are 20 visitor boxes with a wide table separating the prisoner from the visitor. This area is controlled by a closed circuit television system and a

number of officer observation stations. Reasonable contact between the prisoner and visitors is allowed.

There are three enclosed boxes for professional visits during which an officer remains outside the door. There are 2 screened boxes which are used for security reasons.

There is also a family room which is used for special visits. This room can be used for a family visit on special occasions such as children's confirmation or first holy communion.

A prisoner who may not get temporary release for a bereavement may also have the use of this room with his family. Prison officers are strategically placed within the room with consideration being given to the sensitivity of the situation.

6. MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

MEDICAL

6.1 MEETING WITH THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The sole prison psychologist reports that she currently has a waiting list of approximately 66 prisoners. The psychologist whose office is in Clonskeagh, is committed to three days attendance per week. She estimates that she can see between 8 and 12 prisoners per week. This figure of course varies according to other demands.

She says she cannot take on any other prisoners unless one of this number drop out, finish their course of care or are transferred to another institution. The waiting time varies significantly according to a number of factors and is impossible to specify in a general sense. These factors include:

- * Urgency of their referral eg. Acute psychological distress or a critical incident.
- * Nature of the work eg. Parole Board directed, or offence focused work.
- * Release date.
- * Readiness of the prisoner to engage therapeutically.

The psychologist makes a judgment about the status (i e priority or not) of the prisoner on an individual basis. Some prisoners therefore receive an appointment as a matter of priority, while others remain on the waiting-list for a significant period of time.

This would seem to be borne out by the complaints of a number of prisoners seen by the Inspectorate. One claimed he was waiting to see the Psychologist since December 2001 and another since October 2002. While others claimed they didn't know there was a psychologist available.

In addition to the psychology service for prisoners, the psychologist claims that she is also involved in the following work:

- * Training of staff eg. Drug-free unit staff
- * Tutors on Drugs Awareness Course

- * A client related administration eg. Review meeting, report writing and Correspondence.
- * Multi-disciplinary prison based meetings
- * Strategic and operational matters.
- * Research where relevant
- * Supervision of staff

On the face of it, this would appear to be a rather substantial workload for any one individual who is restricted to three days attendance per week. The Psychology service at Wheatfield prison is inadequate.

6.2 **MEETING WITH CONSULTANT FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIST**

The Inspectorate had a meeting with the head psychiatrist who is in charge of the delivery of psychiatric services for Wheatfield (as well as Mountjoy and part of Cloverhill) and a psychiatric nurse who has recently been appointed as a mental health nurse for the prison.

- (a) The head psychiatrist is a forensic psychiatrist with considerable relevant Great Britain experience, described his function as providing an “inreach service”. He had ultimate responsibility for a team comprised mostly of senior registrars and registrars. He sat on the suicide prevention and health care committees. His work has an organisational component - training registrars and monitoring their reports - and a clinical component - monitoring who was in the segregation unit, dealing with “ the more

contentious cases” and preparing reports for the courts. The Governor had mobile phone access to him.

- (b) He said that prison psychiatric clinics were carried out by two senior registrars. A community psychiatric nurse also came to the prison, at least once a week as required. His work involved pre-admission assessments and post discharge follow up.
- (c) The head psychiatrist praised the quality of the nursing staff who had been appointed. He was opposed to the traditional policy of the widespread prescription of drugs to prisoners to placate them. This policy, he said, had a number of disadvantages. Research had been shown it to increase rather than decrease the incidence of suicide attempts; moreover, it greatly increased the demands on the psychiatric service, to the detriment of the quality of service given to more serious cases. He said that he was in the process of leading a change in culture and practice in this area. He said that the problem of over-prescription in the community was particularly notable in Irish medical practice where large numbers of general practitioners worked in isolation from each other, in contrast to having group practices.
- (d) The head psychiatrist also identified as a weakness the absence in the prison of a high dependence landing where vulnerable or difficult-to-manage prisoners could be placed. He indicated that this might be a place where prisoners suffering from a personality disorder which is not treatable as psychiatric illness might be included. It would have to be properly resourced.

It would be a hybrid of a hospital and a prison. He considered that a landing within the prison was preferable to a free-standing building which could attach notoriety, as Broadmoor in England had done.

- (e) The psychiatric nurse described the work of the recently established position of mental health nurse. Two such nurses worked on all floors in the prison. No other prison had such a designated position. The fact that nursing staff were bound by a code of medical ethics encouraged a clinical culture. The former system had been punitive. Patients had not been provided with seats. There had been “problems” with certain doctors. There now was a strong team spirit. She could lift the phone to psychiatric professionals. Up to three weeks ago, nurses could not sit in on clinical consultations with psychiatrists. She felt, however, that there was still a problem about securing privacy for a patient when discussing his condition. The head psychiatrist suggested that administrative support should be given to mental health nurses.

- (f) He also stressed the importance of the Service Level Agreement, drawn up between the National Forensic Service and the Prison Service. This was under discussion at management level at the time of the meeting. This is also a recommendation which arose from previous criticisms in the CPT report.

This would provide for the doubling of admissions. Whilst in the Central Mental Hospital, under the care of the National Forensic Service, a separate

remand centre will be established to assess, treat, and compile court reports, and to recommend appropriate referral to local services, either in prison or the community.

- (g) The Head Psychiatrist outlined a pilot scheme whereby a Psychiatrically qualified nurse, working in the Prison Service could provide a preliminary assessment of the psychiatric needs of the prisoners and prioritise their full assessment. This seems an excellent proposal and if the trial period shows this to be an efficient means of operating it should be made permanent.

6.3 **MEETING WITH NURSING STAFF AND MEDIC**

- (a) A group of two nurses and one medical orderly were seen initially. It was immediately observable that there was no conflict between the role of medical orderly and nurse and that opinions and attitudes were shared by both and duties shared also.

There were 8 nurses and medics to staff the facility in Wheatfield, but of late this figure has doubled to an amazing 16 making life easier for all.

The special problems of health care provision in a prison setting were discussed. There are approximately 380 prisoners in Wheatfield. Most are in frequent contact with the nursing and allied services. The most demanding group in terms of nursing practice are the approximately 80 patients who are in receipt of Methadone Maintenance treatment for their opiate addiction.

- (b) In addition to the General Practice services provided by the appointed doctor who is responsible for the day to day running of this service, there is a weekly input from another doctor a specialist in substance misuse. His roles is to take an overview of the service, assess those who wish to come off methadone, or wish to increase their dose or indeed those with persistent evidence of continued drug misuse, as shown by positive urine samples.

By and large this service is a nurse led and run service. The daily distribution of methadone, the frequent urine sample taking, the sending of urine specimens to the laboratory, the organising of reports as they return, are all carried out by the nurses.

- (c) There are practical difficulties in providing the service in two separate rooms, but this is brought about by the necessity of segregating two different groups of prisoners.

The concerns raised by the staff were:-

- (a) the lack of secretarial backup. All administrative details such as filing out patient appointments, result of tests, typing letters, etc are present dealt with by nursing staff and is patently a waste of resources
- (b) there is an urgent need for the services of a pharmacist. The introduction of medication in blister pack would also be welcomed. Indeed this is the practice in the other centre on the same site, Cloverhill.

6.4 MEETING WITH THE GP AND STAFF

The GP emphasised the points raised earlier by his staff. The lack of secretarial back up.

- (a) The absence of a pharmacist service was again high lighted.
- (b) He pointed out that a lot of his work involved minor aspect of prison life, such as whether the heating should be turned on in the winter. He feels a system of triage should be introduced, to avoid his time being taken up with requests for runners etc.

There is a computer system in situ, but is only partially functional. The GP stressed his anxiety at getting operational as soon as possible and was clearly frustrated at a system which is already outmoded and cannot provide links to hospital and blood test result in it's present form.

- (d) He expressed satisfaction at the broad level of dental services but would appreciate perhaps an extra session. He started a phlebotomy (blood taking) service in the prison, which will greatly reduce the number of escorted visits by prisoners to hospital to avail of this service, with corresponding benefits to all.

The main emphasis the doctor placed initially was on team work and this was evident in his presentation.

- (e) The other area of emphasis in his presentation was the prioritisation of allocation, especially his time, within the prison. There is little point in the doctor seeing 20 patients a day, when all the majority want is special toothpaste etc, as he pointed out.
- (f) He has an excellent relationship with the local hospital and rapid access to their services. There are no problems with the A&E Department, he tries to deal with most emergencies that occur, cuts, scalds, etc on an in house basis.
- (g) We discussed the area of needle exchange. The consensus was that with a successful programme of methadone maintenance there would be little demand within the prison for such provision, and that the potential dangers outweighed any potential benefits at this time.

INSPECTION OF THE MEDICAL AREA OF THE PRISON

- (h) The approach to the medical area, through a portion of the prison itself was interesting, and a contrast to the consultants past experience of prison conditions. The prison itself appears to be spotlessly clean, despite major building work going on outside. The area appears to be recently painted, it was bright, the windows are tall and open onto well maintained lawns.
- (i) The medical area is on the ground floor and consists of a suite of rooms which are interconnected and which give the impression of having been purposely designed as a medical centre, rather than the hammering together of cells.

The accommodation was clean, bright comfortable. We were shown the operation of the computer system. Charts are excellently maintained and reports filed in an orderly fashion.

- (j) We inspected the room in which the medication is stored. Only a days requirements or so at most are kept here, however there are larger supplies of antibiotics, etc available. The introduction of blister pack facility would eliminate the need for such storage. A box of 100 distalgesic tablets was left on the shelf. These tablets should be kept in a locked cabinet until needed, and a cabinet should be provided.
- (k) The doctor's main examination room was bright and fully equipped. The dressing room and storage rooms were clean and uncluttered. We looked at the excellent dental facility. It would seem that the attendance by the dentist of one full day and one morning per week should be increased.

We travelled to the other examination and treatment room, where urine sample collection for testing was in progress. The urinal and surrounding area were spotlessly clean and hygienic. The examination room was spartan, but adequate.

- (l) We were shown a landing and invited by an prisoner to look into his cell. The landing and cell were of the same standard of cleanliness I have previously noted throughout.

6.5 MEETING WITH SENIOR PROBATION AND WELFARE OFFICER

1. There is a total staff of 6 operating the Probation and Welfare Service in Wheatfield Prison. This number comprises of 1 Senior Officer, 4 other officers and 1 part-time Employment and Training Officer operating the “Linkage Programme”.
2. The Probation and Welfare Service (P&W) defines its own role within the prison and has significant autonomy. The P&W, however, is not proactive within the prison and operates on a consultative basis. The main functions that appear to consume the time of the P&W are the committal procedure and providing for the general well being of the prisoners. The P&W also attempts to provide services for AA and NA meetings, the Drug Free Units, preparing reports for the Parole Board and providing treatment and other programmes for prisoners. The P&W considers that it is servicing 2 prisons owing to the segregated nature of Wheatfield Prison. 2 officers are assigned to sex offenders. The P&W provides a service for approx 400 prisoners serving a broad range of sentences on a ratio of roughly 1:100. The P&W considers that the ratio should be 1:50. 16-18 consultations with prisoners take place each day between 10 a.m and 12 noon and between 2 p.m and 4 p.m. The P&W does not fall under the authority of the prison service. While the relationship with the Governor is described as good, the P&W feels that it is perceived by the staff as a “do-gooder” and a visitor in the prison. However, the prison staff and the P&W work well together.

3. The provision of treatment for sex offenders is considered a priority within the P&W service. There is no formal programme for sex offenders and any programme provided operates on a request basis. There is little prisoner incentive to participate in a programme to recognise their offence and manage their behaviour. As a consequence the number participation is low. There are 10 places on offer for the 76 or so sex offenders in Wheatfield. Compounding the lack of incentive to participate is the lack of resources available to the P&W service and in particular, the availability of the psychologist for only three days per week.
4. The P&W also considers the Literacy, Social Skills, Group Skills and Low Threshold programmes as priorities within the service to the prisoners. These programmes are provided between 2 and 3 times a year. A Thinking Skills programme is considered necessary.
5. The other time consuming functions of the P&W service are maintaining the 2 Drug Free Units (DFU) catering for 32 prisoners, 60% of whom are from the segregated unit (there is demand for a third DFU) and preparing reports for the Parole Board. Owing to the large number of prisoners eligible for parole the P&W service has to prepare on average 15 risk assessment reports in a 6 month period.

6. A consequence for providing the above priority services is that a prisoner participates in 1 session each month in the relevant programme which is considered to be of little benefit to the prisoner in question. For example, a prisoner that killed another prisoner is seen once a month.
7. The P&W participates in interdisciplinary meetings which provides good contact between the various disciplines. The Senior P&W Officers from all the prisons meet once a month.
8. Apart from the matters identified above the P&W considers as priorities the following:-
 - (a) Post release services (dealing with accommodation and social welfare entitlements, medical cards) for prisoners and especially sex offenders,
 - (b) Aftercare for prisoners which is currently provided for by other colleagues but which should have a structure within the existing P&W service,
 - (c) Better psychiatric care for the prisoners of which there is a considerable demand. There are currently 3 clinics a week and the waiting list is long,
 - (d) Emphasis on education.

6.6 MEETING WITH THE TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OFFICER - LINKAGE

1. The Training and Employment Officer (T & E) operates on a part time basis and is the only one to do so from within a prison. This was a full

time position within the prison until recently. The T & E officer now divides her time between Wheatfield Prison and the Probation and Welfare office in Ballyfermot. Interestingly there does not appear to be any decline in the numbers she is dealing with in the prison. Similar Services are provided to other prisons but not within the prison itself. The office of the T & E Officer was established from scratch 3 years ago and operates under the Probation and Welfare Service. The T & E Officer relies heavily upon the support of the Prison Service to perform its functions. In this regard the Governor is highly supportive of the T & E Officer's role within the prison. The T & E Officer works with prisoners on a referral basis from the Probation and Welfare Service who assess the prisoners. The T & E Officer finds employment for prisoners whilst they are serving their sentences. The employment is carried out while the prisoner is on temporary release (TR). The T & E Officer also places prisoners in back to school programmes and in colleges. The T & E Officer is not permitted by the Welfare Service to work with sex offenders.

2. The T & E Officer sees the role as building:-
 - (a) Public Relations with potential employers,
 - (b) Networking
 - (c) Making contacts.
3. The T & E Officer encourages and places great emphasis upon prisoners not only obtaining qualifications and education (Certs, FAS

and City and Guilds etc) but more importantly putting the qualifications/education to practical use in the workplace. The T & E Officer indicated that prisoners do not value the qualifications unless they can put their training/education to practical use. Integral to the success of this office is the TR system which operates as an incentive to the prisoners to gain TR with the consequent benefit of adopting the habit of regular work.

4. The T & E Officer has been highly successful in building and maintaining links with potential employers from both the private and public sector. Much of the recent success is credited to obtaining interviews and job offers for well paid jobs. In this regard the success of the programme is based upon the strength of the economy whereby prisoners obtain and remain in well-paid employment. A further important factor in the success of the programme is the willingness of the Governor to facilitate the prisoners attending interviews. Ultimately and unquestionably the success of this programme must be credited to the T & E Officer whose efforts are immeasurable.
5. The problems facing the T & E Officer are:
 - (a) Jobs obtained for prisoners can be lost owing to the delay in securing TR
 - 1(b) The length of TR can effect the securing of a job. In this regard, prisoners on 3 and 6 month periods of TR are difficult to place,

(c) The abandonment of the “revolving door” system has affected the T & R Officer’s success in placing prisoners,

(d) Prisoners on long term sentences (7 years plus) require high support and longer periods of TR to make placements a success

6. The T & E Office is highly successful. On average 100 prisoners are placed each year with employers. This success is set against the fact that 1 prisoner in the last 3 years absconded on route to an interview. It should be noted that the T & E Officer accompanies the prisoner to an interview without a prison officer.

6.7 **MEETING WITH THE POA**

(a) The inspectorate met with the chairman and two committee members of the local branch of the POA. The officers felt that there was a liberal regime in the prison and had no real complaints about the management, indeed they were unusually complimentary of the Governor and his management team. However, they felt that many of the prison officers had talents and qualifications which are not being used to their full potential. They said that they could make a far greater contribution to the system and don't just see themselves as a "turn key".

(b) They complained that there was no recognition of a job well done. The Inspector told them that he was conducting research in England on the Butler awards which are presented out each year in recognition for

outstanding work by various people in the Prison Service and hopefully something similar might be done in this country.

- (c) When questioned about the high prison officer/prisoner ratio which according to the literature published by IPS is the highest in the world, they said that the regime operated by IPS requires that number of prison officers and more. They said that it is only with a change in the regime that the number of officers required can be reduced. When asked about their attitude to change, their response was, that in general the Prison Officers' Association had agreed a policy of change with IPS provided it was of a positive and constructive nature. Safety of staff and prisoners is the priority in any change.
- (d) With the absence of the new Prisons Bill the 1947 Rules are still applicable. They say these rules are antiquated, totally impractical, unrealistic and in general cannot be enacted in the day-to-day running of a prison 56 years later. They had a major grievance in the fact that despite them being impractical to operate, the rules were in fact implemented in full in the matter of staff discipline. This they say amounts to double standards. [The Inspectorate is aware that there is an agreed staff code of discipline which is in operation since mid 1990's concerning disciplinary matters]
- (e) When asked about the high number of transfer requests from officers they said this was mostly due to geographical reasons and the need for closer proximity to home.

6.8 MEETING WITH THE CHAPLAINS

There are two full-time chaplains appointed to Wheatfield prison. One is a Mercy Sister originating from New Zealand and the other is a Presentation Sister. Father Peter Mc Verry SJ celebrates Mass on Sundays and Holy days. Because of the system of segregation there has to be two masses on those days, one for the protected prisoners and one for the ordinary prisoners.

- (a) The chaplains complained that there is just one Psychologist attached to the prison. This service is totally inadequate at present and there is a long waiting list, sometimes taking years to see the Psychologist. Another gap in the services is the almost total absence of a counselling service and this is in spite of the fact that many of those incarcerated have experienced serious physical, emotional and in some cases, sexual abuse throughout their lives.

During the past four years, the chaplains say they succeeded in securing the services of four highly qualified counsellors to assist in this area. They say this has proved to be highly successful as a pilot project and thank the management and staff for facilitating it.

- (b) They welcome the introduction of drug-free units and the training skills afforded to prison officers who work in them. The appointment of a drugs counsellor is also a welcomed initiative.

There are weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in Wheatfield prison and there are a few treatment programmes for those who struggle with alcoholism.

- (c) There are on average 75-80 sex offenders held in Wheatfield prison and there is no treatment programme available to them. A rehabilitative programme must be a priority for this category of prisoner considering the nature of their offence and that ultimately all of them will be released back into society.
- (d) The problem of people with mental illness being held in prison was also raised. They question how a prison is expected to care for and provide a service for people with mental illness.
- (e) The reintegration of prisoners and the introduction of a proper sentence management programme from IPS would be welcomed. The IPS have in fact promised such a programme but as of yet have not delivered.

One of the most positive developments in Wheatfield prison in recent years was the introduction of the linkage programme. It is the lifeline for many in offering employment and opening a way to further education and training in the community. It is the experience and enthusiasm of the employment officer and those associated with her which is the secret to its success.
- (f) They paid tribute to a number of initiatives undertaken by Prison Management in the past year with very positive links to the community.

These include the tremendous work undertaken for the Special Olympics and the project for the elderly in St Joseph's Hospital, Trim, Co. Meath. These projects are of huge rehabilitative benefit to the prisoners.

- (g) The chaplains were very complimentary of the Governor and his management team. They said he is very progressive in his leadership and is always open to constructive development.

6.9 **MEETING WITH THE HEADS OF SERVICES**

The inspectorate met with the heads of services. A large number of topics were covered but no major issues of concern were identified. However, they did mention a difficulty experienced by prisoners' visitors who rely on public transport. Apparently they could travel by the Dublin Bus service as far as a local Hospital and from there a minibus service was provided to bring them to the prison. With the provision of a footpath from the main road leading to the prison, maybe by coincidence or otherwise, the minibus service was withdrawn. It is a considerable distance from the local Hospital to the prison gates and with the Irish climate it becomes an additional hardship for those who rely on public-transport to visit the prison, particularly with fractious children.

Another topic raised was the benefits, or not, of the use of sniffer dogs in the continuous battle against the smuggling of illegal substances. One of the officers had observed the dogs in action at Hydebank prison outside Belfast. He outlined that from their experience the mere sight of a sniffer dog at the

gate can cause some visitors to return to their car before attempting to return to the prison having left their “packages” in the car. He wasn't too sure of the success rate of the sniffer dogs in their detection or any of the implications involved in the setting up of such a service. The IPS could possibly research this to see if the introduction of such a service is practical and worthwhile. The Inspector is very supportive of this venture.

6.10 **MEETING WITH THE VISITING COMMITTEE**

- (a) The inspectorate met with two members of the visiting committee. The Inspector mentioned that he had received a lot of complaints from prisoners about the quality of the food. The two representatives concurred with this statement and said that they also receive complaints from prisoners with regard to the standard of food.

They said that there was no foundation for these claims and in fact most months two members of the V.C. partake in the prisoners lunch to sample same. They are satisfied that the 28 days' cycle menu of which a dietician is involved, is well balanced.

- (b) The V.C. identified that most of the complaints came from short-term prisoners. They said there should be a separate prison for short-term prisoners, i.e those serving two years or less. People should not be sent to prison for not meeting debts. They said the visiting committee should have more power within the system.

- (c) The Wheatfield visiting committee have in the last two years introduced a documented complaints system in which a record of all complaints to the V.C. are now kept.
- (d) They say that as regards the Governor's ruling on a P19 (charge sheet) there should be a process of appeal for the prisoner to the visiting committee, and that a prisoner should not serve the punishment imposed until the V.C. had heard the appeal and ruled on same. [This suggestion needs to be examined as it could result in the daily attendance at the prison of the VC members. Failure to attend would result in a back log of cases and perhaps a breakdown of discipline]
- (e) They identified a group who are making representation to the Minister for Justice Equality and Law Reform for the inclusion of ex-prisoners on visiting committee's.

The two representatives are certainly not in favour of this policy. The Inspector agrees with the V.C's members views.

6.11 **STAFF SUPPORT OFFICER**

There is only one staff support officer (S.S.O.) in Wheatfield prison. The said officer informed us that there were exams held recently to fill the vacancies for an additional two or possibly three more staff support officers. He is at present awaiting the appointments but has no idea when this will take place.

This is a very important service for staff and it is totally unreasonable to think that one officer could provide such a service to staff in a prison the size of Wheatfield. The new appointments should be made as soon as possible.

6.12 **MEETING WITH HEAD CHEF**

The Inspectorate had a meeting with the Head Chef. He is an imaginative excellent chef. The menus for the prisoners are designed by a dietician. He feels a lot of the prisoners do not have subtle palates. They would be seeking fish, beans and chips every day. However, he prides himself on a very well balanced menu. He holds surveys among the prisoners by sending out questionnaires seeking their views on the menu, the 28 day menu cycle and any suggestions for change. He gets some very interesting replies!!! However, the main changes sought on the recently returned questionnaires were (a) too many stews (b) remove pasta from the menu (c) replace the yoghurt as a dessert, (d) change the tea menu (e) too long a time span from meal at 4.30 pm each day until breakfast at 8.15 am.

The chef outlined that on a trial basis they are going to change the dinner meal (from mid day to evening with a light lunch at midday). This is due to commence at the start of September. It will be most interesting to see how this experiment works.

7. MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS PRISONER GROUPS.

During the course of our two-week inspection a considerable number of prisoner groups and individual prisoners were seen by the Inspectorate. This procedure was dictated by the system of separation for protected prisoners.

On a preliminary point, a number of the prisoners indicated that they had not received notice of the visit of the inspectorate. There were no notices posted and no official information was provided, they claimed. On checking with management and the liaison officer assigned by Wheatfield prison they indicated the contrary.

7.1 Communications

Telephone use

A lot of prisoners complained about only having one phone-call per day and sometimes having to choose between their family and their solicitor. The system in place allows each prisoner three programmed phone numbers of which one can be a solicitor. They say a call to their legal representative should not exclude them the right to a daily phone call to family or friends. Otherwise the system was good in their view.

7.2 Letters received and sent out.

The average number of letters received per week was between 2 and 3. There is a censorship policy in place and one prisoner alleged that his legal correspondence was opened. There can be a slight delay in sending and receiving mail for non nationals who may not be able to write or read

English. In such cases the services of an interpreter is required. Otherwise there was no major concern with receiving or sending letters.

7.3 Visitors

The prisoners impression of the visiting facilities was that they were good and visits were facilitated. There were some complaints about their visitors being delayed and that the start-up times for visits often runs up to 15 minutes late. The reception given to visitors by prison staff was good apart from a couple of individual complaints.

7.4 Information

There was a considerable amount of contradiction among the various groups of prisoners concerning the provision of information on committal relating to their entitlements, facilities, rules, etc which is supplied in booklets/pamphlet/ leaflet format. Some claiming that they received it while others stated that they never got it.

General information on the prison concerning educational facilities, health awareness, library facilities etc was available.

All the prisoners were aware of how to see the Governor, the Doctor, the Probation and Welfare service, the Chaplain and the Visiting Committee.

7.5 Drugs and alcohol

A very large percentage of the prisoners interviewed had used illegal drugs and were on a drug treatment programme prior to entering prison. All the prisoners agreed that illegal drugs could be obtained in the prison. They

expressed the view that counselling for drug addiction was a problem owing to the availability of only one psychiatrist and one psychologist for the entire prison population. A lot of the prisoners were drug dependent and had undergone a detoxification programme, while others were on methadone maintenance programme. Some of the prisoners had a problem with alcohol before entering prison. They also admitted attempting to make home-made alcohol for consumption within the prison. Sometimes they succeeded and sometimes they were caught by the Prison Officers.

7.6 Bullying and racism

No prisoner admitted to been bullied by another prisoner but a number of them claimed to have been bullied by prison staff in the form of intimidation and threats of P19s. One prisoner claimed to have been pushed. No prisoner reported any incident of bullying.

There was no problem with the treatment of foreign prisoners and they said that the non-nationals were treated the same as anyone else. However, they did allege that racist comments were made by some of the staff. The impression gained was that there was no tension between national and non-national prisoners.

7.7 Food

The general consensus was that the standard of food had deteriorated since 2000 when the food was described as good. The general complaints were that fish was always served on Fridays, there was too much chicken with rice

and there were too many stews and pies. They also indicated they would prefer mashed as opposed to boiled potatoes. The prisoners indicated that the food portions could be larger and that the main meal of the day (12-30 p.m.) should be substituted for the 4-15 p.m. tea (this change is in fact to commence in September 2003 on a trial basis).

The kitchen provides a 28 cycle day menu and a 14 day cycle vegetarian option. Religious, cultural and medical dietary needs are also catered for.

7.8 Health care

There was a general dissatisfaction with the health care facilities which were described as poor. The dissatisfaction led some prisoners to believe it was futile to put their name down to see a health care professional. In particular the main complaint was the delay involved. The only exception was the optician, and this was due to the lack of requests for optical services. The one prisoner who required optical care indicated that the service was quite prompt. The following are the prisoners' views on the delays involved in seeing the health care professionals

- (a) Doctor GP (same day or the day after)
- (b) Psychiatrist (long delays, with no specific time indicated)
- (c) Psychologist (some very long delays one prisoner waiting since December 2001 and another since October 2002)
- (d) Dentist (approximately three months with the exception of emergencies)
- (e) Optician (one week)

- (f) Medical Orderly/Nurses (the view expressed was that these individuals did little for the prisoners save to advise them to see the doctor).

Information on health care promotion awareness courses were available on notices in the prison as well as in the library. Patches to stop smoking were also available.

7.9 *Relationships and regimes in the Prison in general.*

- (a) The prisoners indicated that inter-prisoner relationships were OK and for the majority the staff/prisoner relationships were similarly OK.
- (b) A number of the prisoners had been on report (P19) and some had been placed in a strip/isolation cell.
- (c) The training provided in the workshops was considered useful for employment prospects on release.
- (d) Some complained of the type of work they were involved in.
- (e) All the prisoner stated that there was no counselling facility available for anger management, drug treatment and alcohol treatment.
- (f) The prison was clean and all prisoners have toilet facilities in their cells.

(g) Management state that the design of the prison plus the type of regimes required (holding ordinary, plus two different segregated groups of prisoners within the one prison) does not help towards cohesion

(h) The prisoners considered that many improvements could be made.

On the morning of one of the days of our inspection we had interviews with two prisoners who specifically requested to talk to us.

The first prisoner made certain criticisms of the delivery of the medical services. While the position had improved recently, he said that he had experienced delays of up to four days before seeing the doctor. He said that it was not possible for a prisoner to ask directly for a psychiatrist or optician, the request had to be channelled through the doctor. He had a low impression of the ability of the nurses. He claimed that prison officers sometimes gave out medicine, including anti-depressants. Management state that no prison officers give out medicine and the medication distributed is done by the nurses only on prescription from the doctor or psychiatrist.

He also had specific complaints about the care of his leg, which had needed several operations on an ongoing basis. He claimed that appointments with a specialist in Waterford in whom he had confidence had been cancelled by the doctor in the prison.

He said that he had applied to the Parole Board last January for early release and had been told that he would be called in a few weeks time, but, that he had heard nothing since. He had applied more than a year ago to participate in a "Start your own business" course but had no response to date.

While the complaints of prisoner number 1 are recorded as above it must be said that a lot of the allegations are contradicted by the information collected from the other prisoners and on inquiries from the medical staff.

The second of the 2 prisoners interviewed, whose right leg was partially amputated while in prison, complained that the medical treatment he had received in the prison before the amputation had not been adequate. He said that the staff had been instructed in how to administer dressings but had done so negligently and that the infection in his leg was allowed to worsen to the point where amputation became necessary. He acknowledged that he had consulted a solicitor who had advised that he would not be likely to succeed in establishing negligence on the part of the prison authorities. A specific complaint made was that, when he told a number of staff that his leg, after partial amputation, had a severe sensation of burning, the (apparently contemptuous) response was: "Then put it in water".

He said that his request of last August to see a specialist regarding his hip was declined by the prison medical authorities, who attributed the problem to ligaments. They said that they would write a letter to the Hospital concerned

about the matter. He understood that the particular Hospital was refusing to see patients from Prisons. He had no response to the problem.

He said that he had been ordering silicone socks since January, to no avail. He raised a question of general importance regarding the position of medical card holders in prison. He claimed that, whereas a medical card holder outside prison would receive a prosthetic leg (costing €4,000) automatically and without delay, a prisoner, although a medical card holder, will not be given it for two months.

He also provided a file of correspondence, in which the complaint about the treatment of his leg includes an assertion of unhygienic conditions in the prison.

Again a lot of the allegations of prisoner number 2 would seem to be without foundation. On checking with one of the health boards it would appear that the medical services provided by Wheatfield prison would be equally comparable with that of the outside community. There is a procedure of complaint available to all medical card holders with the various health boards of Ireland. The allegation concerning the hospital not taking prisoners is without foundation.

8. EDUCATION

- 8.1 We examined the educational facilities at the Prison and the Head Teacher gave us very considerable assistance.

- 8.2 It was emphasised that poor literacy level among the prisoners affected its choice, and mode of teaching, of all subjects. NCVA courses were particularly attractive as they were modular, could be studied at different levels, set attainable goals and were folder-based, making them compatible with mobility of prisoners between prisons.
- 8.3 The Junior and Leaving Certificates had some utility and contained excellent programmes but had certain practical difficulties: the list of subjects was more limited and their two-year duration was hard to maintain with the high degree of mobility of prisoners.
- 8.4 The headteacher said that those who studied Open University courses tended to choose Sociology, Literature, Engineering, Maths and Computer Studies. The latter presented difficulties as it required internet access.
- 8.5 The headteacher said that there was a huge emphasis on the creative arts - painting, pottery, music (guitar, music theory, recording) and drama. The creative arts had several benefits: they drew prisoners into improving their literacy and they helped long-term prisoners to get through their sentence.
- 8.6 A social education programme, run in conjunction with Probation and Welfare, included a course in parenting, since many prisoners were fathers but had little knowledge of the needs of small children. Other courses were Group Skills, a Pre-Apprentice programme, Woodwork and Cookery. Philosophy was quite popular, especially for middle-aged prisoners.

Addiction Studies were taught by an ex-prisoner who had overcome an alcohol problem and gone on to complete an Addiction Studies course in College.

- 8.7 The headteacher considered that there was “screaming need” for counseling for drug addiction. The psychological service was “horribly inadequate”. The agencies were beginning to work together, but more needed to be done in this regard. An interdisciplinary drugs awareness program was now in action.
- 8.8 The impression of the head teacher was that of a highly dedicated and inspired person with a very strong empathy for prisoners and a real understanding of the liberating possibilities of education.
- 8.9 We were taken on a tour of the facilities, which included the kitchen (for cookery classes) and the computer room. It appears that the computer equipment is less than satisfactory. Dell has been replaced by a cheaper, “yellow pack” alternative which has given problems. There are not enough computers and the costs for cartridges and paper is putting pressures on the budget. Restricting prisoners’ access to computers is a false economy. Computer literacy is becoming essential for a wide range of employment. Acquiring computer skills improves employability, self-confidence, general literacy and access to the wider world. In 2002 the number of prisoners who

sat examinations were as follows:

Leaving Certificate 13

Junior Certificate 22

City & Guilds etc 14

Accreditation/Certificates awarded 65

8.10 PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

The Inspectorate attended the presentation of an award from the Open University to a mature student. It was a diploma and next year hopefully he will get the degree. It was a most impressive ceremony. The lady who represents the University stated that there were 80 in the whole of the prison service who are doing the Open University exams. This is a wonderful achievement and is to be encouraged. The drama teacher produces a play every year but it is not well attended which is a great pity. She tends to put on Shakespeare and she found that "A Winters Tale" was a great success and that the prisoners revelled in the play. The Inspector undertook if at all possible to attend any future productions. After the formal ceremony the Inspectorate attended a drama work shop where nine prisoners including two Africans, sat in a circle and in various speeches, songs and dances performed their parts. Then at the end they explained how they had arranged the script and what it was suppose to represent. It was a most moving experience and was obviously hugely enjoyed not merely by the nine participants but also by the packed audience. The Inspector was surprised to find that there is no real racism as regards these Africans as far as the evidence went. However, he also met an itinerant who of course being

accustomed to freedom finds prison particularly tough. He said that lots of officers called him “you knacker”. If true this is childish and immature from either prisoners or officers.

The Inspector attended not merely the drama workshop but also the exhibition of paintings, some of which were extremely good. On the same occasion the Listowel writers week awards were presented to five prisoners for their submission of short stories and poetry. It was a fantastic achievement to have won so many awards.

There was also an acknowledgement from the staff of St. Joseph’s Special Hospital in Trim, County Meath to the prisoners and staff in recognition of work done by them for the hospital. A “peace” garden was established at the hospital for the patients.

9. LIBRARY SERVICE

The Dublin prison library service is an agency service of Dublin City Public Libraries to the Irish Prison Service, and is seen as an integral part of the Prison Education Service under the aegis of the Coordinator of Education. A team of four professional librarians (headed by a senior librarian) is responsible for the management of library and information services to offenders in all of the Dublin Prisons (excluding the Training Unit) and to the Curragh and Portlaoise Prisons, on a (long-term) temporary basis.

- 9.1 The primary objective of the service is to deliver a public library service to prisoners, as far as possible of equivalent standard to that provided to the general community outside. Another function of the service is to provide a lifelong learning opportunities to prisoners on an independent, informal, self-paced basis.
- 9.2 The Inspectorate met with the senior librarian and she identified a number of issues that she was concerned about. She felt that within the system the library service was isolated as a group. She said that more cooperation between the Library service and the Education Service could lead to greater educational prospects for the prisoners.
- 9.3 Prison officers work in the library and are trained by the librarians. She said that the turnover of officers appointed to these posts was far too high and this leads to inconsistency. It doesn't allow the officers to gain experience after their initial basic training within the library.
- 9.4 A new Open Learning Centre was installed at Wheatfield Library in April. This facility includes four computers, which allow access by prisoners to a wide range of multimedia CD Roms, which allow them to develop computer literacy skills, search electronic encyclopedias, improve their literacy skills and play chess.
- 9.5 She said her budget allocation is quite small and the service is extremely over stretched.

10 HEALTH AND SAFETY/Fire Aspect

- 10.1 The Inspectorate team met the senior officers with responsibility for Health and Safety. This involved the Chief Trades Officer and the officer in charge of staff training in areas of Health and Safety particularly fire prevention and emergency training. The fire register book was produced within which is recorded all the various checks relating to fire fighting equipment that was carried out throughout the year. Records of the various staff training, the dates, and the times that the training was carried out during the year was also recorded. The servicing of a considerable number of the fire fighting equipment, fire detection systems and fire prevention equipment is carried out by outside contractors. The Inspectorate were supplied with a list of the contract work that was carried out on such equipment plus the record of the dates and times of same. The local trades staff carried out a considerable number of checks in relation to the water sprinkler valves, fire hose reels, the fire extinguishers and their refills plus the cell door slips throughout the year.
- 10.2 Wheatfield Prison is the only prison to date that has a water sprinkler installed in each of the cells. In the event of it being activated it sprays water over the entire cellular area and in fact is extremely forceful. In the event of a fire in a cell there are two detectors which are placed behind an air grill just below ceiling level. The first detector registers smoke within the area which is displayed on a computer panel in the main control console area. The second detector within the grill area registers the density of the smoke and on reaching a certain density, it sends a signal to the fire alarm system which automatically opens the sprinkler heads and the water sprinkler

immediately comes into operation. This event is recorded on computer and on a print out in the overall control room. A repeater panel computer type reading, which is located in the Chief Trades Officer's office, is printed out automatically, so when one of the water sprinklers is activated in the cell, it is also recorded within the trades area.

10.3 In the hub or control area within each unit there are two fire extinguishers. There is also a switch within the hub that the officer can operate an extractor fan which draws out smoke from within the unit area. There is another switch which operates a fan which is located near the entrance door to each unit. This fan draws in fresh air from the outside and the extractor fan pulls it out on the opposite side, at the end of the corridor. There is a hose reel within each unit that reaches to the furthest cell. Immediately outside the door on the spinal corridor of each unit there is also a hose reel, both of which are water supply and fully active. Within the hub unit or control area of each unit there is also a resuscitation pack and a hoffmann knife. The hoffmann knife is in a break glass unit which is used in the event of a suicide by a ligature. There is a fire alarm bell installed in each unit but it only operates when the general fire alarm is activated. [except units two, six and nine which does not require the general alarm to activate them].

10.4 There are no smoke detectors within the recreation area or within the corridor section of the units. In the event of an evacuation, there are no signs for directions as to where one must proceed. There are also no signage for assembly points and there are no signs on the spinal corridors once one

leaves the unit. There are no signages either in any of the stairwells leading from the first floor to the exercise yards. There are emergency lighting fittings within each of the units, but there are no emergency standby (specially protected) lighting, operated on a different circuit, if in the event of a disturbance. The ceilings of the units and of the spinal corridors are reasonably low and as smoke rises to the ceiling, it hasn't far to travel until the area could become quite smoke filled. However, the walls and ceilings of the cells are of mass concrete and each cell is divided by a mass concrete wall, so the possibility of fire spreading is not as great as it would be if it were timber or other such type material used in the construction.

10.5 There are two water mains supplying the prison, one for domestic use and the other for fire and emergency use. There is 136,000 gallon water tank stored within the area. There are jockey pumps attached to the water tanks which give additional pressure to the hose reels when operational. The water supply is connected to Dublin County Council's water supply mains and the pressure is seven bar which is acceptable to the Dublin Fire Brigade engines. There are 20 fire hydrants located at various areas around the prison which have been pointed out to us on our inspection.

10.6 The Inspectorate were supplied with an information booklet which is given to prisoners on committal. There is no mention of fire evacuation drills, procedures to follow, or fire alarm signals if in the event of an emergency. There is a notice placed on the top inside of each cell door which states "Notice fire started deliberately may result in loss of life". It would be helpful

to have instructions placed in the information booklet or in the cells outlining what to do in the event of an evacuation. There is also a need for the signs to be erected in order for the prisoners to follow same in an evacuation situation.

10.7 The Inspectorate were shown records of fire evacuation exercise which were carried out in 2001/2002/2003 of which 10, were carried out in 2001, 9, in 2002, and 3, to date in 2003. The last being on the 8th of April. All was done at 2 p.m and the numbers of staff used in these evacuations were the same complement as would apply on night duty. All of the units have been evacuated over periods of time. It is generally two units per exercise. In a fire evacuation exercise, the officer in charge in the central control unit gives instructions to the prisoners within their cells and this is of assistance in the fast evacuation of the units concerned. The times that are recorded for the evacuations are quite impressive. The longest time for an evacuation was four minutes but the average time was one and a half minutes.

10.8 The Dublin Fire Brigade from Dolphin's Barn, Tallaght, and Phibsborough fire stations have been on familiarisation tours of the prison on the 23/10/2001, the 15/09/2002 and the 25/4/2003. On each of their visits they brought the fire tenders with them in order to enhance their exercise. They were shown as to where the fire hydrants are located, the entrances, the layout, etc of the prison. There is also a break glass unit at the main gate within which is contained a map of the prison with site plans, the locations of the hydrants, the exits from the various units, etc. So in the event of a fire or

an emergency, on the brigades arrival at the main gate, the break glass can be broken and the plan handed to them. It is then collected from them on their departure.

10.9 There are pyro vents installed in the stairwells, workshop, gym area which open when the system detects smoke and allows it out through the roof window area. The new buildings attached to the prison, the administration, the locker room, the new laundry, all have smoke detectors installed as well as fire barrier doors plus various means of exit. There is also a water sprinkler system installed in the new laundry. There are no signages for evacuation procedures on the administration corridor nor on the staff corridor. There are no smoke detectors in any of the offices. There are no smoke extractors on the administration or staff corridor. The trades staff state that they have considerable problems in keeping the break glass alarm button boxes on the corridors from being damaged by prisoners who have access to them and that some of the trade officers are employed almost full time in replacing these glass panels.

10.10 Control and restraint phase one staff refresher training, was carried out in October/November/December 2002 with almost all of the necessary staff participating. Further staff refreshed training in control and restrained phase two took place in the past six months. The BA refresher training course has also been carried out during January/February/March 2003 and a large number of officers have partaken of same. Fire drill exercises takes place on Saturday mornings in which the donning and doffing of the BA equipment is

also done. There are also familiarisation training in the use of the fire extinguishers, fire hoses, and the discharge of the fire extinguishers. Instructions are also given in the various uses of the hose reels, their role out, how they are turned on and how the additional pressure is applied to them. Five instructors are trained in the delivery of the BA refresher training. There has been no staff security awareness training given of recent times which will need attention.

- 10.11 The Inspectorate team were shown the basement area in which there is an air intake mechanism installed which distributes air throughout the various units. In the event of this area becoming smoke filled, the intake ceases and it turns to reverse mode which then draws out the smoke. We were also shown the fire alarm systems, the services facilities, the emergency lighting and the standby generators in the event of back up being required. The Inspectorate team were also shown the boiler house which is very impressive and this area won a prize for the best boiler house in Ireland. The boiler house consists of four boilers, one of which operates from gas while the other three operate from gas and oil. We were shown the incinerator systems that is in operation for the disposal of the waste from the prison as well as the compactor and baling facility which is applied to cardboard items. They also have a machine which presses all of the tin cans into flat particles and have a packaging facility for the storage of plastic bags, etc. The officer in charge informed us that he intends to take cardboard from Cloverhill and hopes to get sale for the bailed items, if possible.

10.12 The Inspectorate team were supplied with a copy of the fire vulnerability study which was carried out by McAlister Deveraux Keating, Safety Health Fire and Environmental consultants. This study was completed in July 2001 and its main findings are that (a) There should be another egress from each of the units. (b) There should be fire doors installed on the corridors in order to prevent fire and smoke spreading (c) Several of the doors to be replaced with fire resistant doors to last up to 30 minutes in some cases and up to 60 minutes in other cases (d) The emergency lighting and the signages are other items raised within it. We were informed that the contract to carry out this work is at tender stage and it is not known if it will be accepted due to the finance involved or as to when work may commence.

OVERALL (*view of health and safety matters fire aspects*)

The Inspectorate team found that overall there were very good systems within the cells itself, the detection method, the water sprinkler head, as well as the hose reels within each unit and on the corridors were very impressive. That staff training is very much up to date except for the security awareness training. The BA training is also up to date. The lack of emergency lighting, (in a disturbance) signages, and assembly point locations needs attention. The fire vulnerability report highlighted the 2nd exit facility from each of the unit's plus fire break doors on the long corridors as needing attention. There is a need for lighted signs to be erected on both the administration and staff corridors for in the event of an evacuation plus directions to the assembly point for those areas. There are no smoke detectors on either of the corridors. The other area of concern is the car

parking problem on the main entrance to the prison. Vehicles are double parked and this could cause a problem if the fire brigade was required in an emergency. The manner in which vehicles are parked at the entrance may leave it difficult for the fire brigade's entrance and this should be looked at.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The signs at the main entrance to be changed from Wheatfield Place of Detention to Wheatfield Prison [4.2 Page 7]
2. Cell accommodation/the ceilings of the cells are in need of repainting [5.5 Page 17 and 18]
[The cell ceilings appear to be of stippling/terylene material and were informed by management that they are fire retardent and sound proof, therefore the possibility of painting is very difficult and costly]
3. The cells at the ground floor area of reception are in need of painting and cleaning [5.16 Page 31]
4. The standard of food in staff canteen could be improved. A lot could be done to improve the quality of the service provided. [5.25 Page 44]
5. The quality of the seating provided is poor in the visitors waiting room area. New seating should be provided. The whole area requires painting. [5.27 Page 46]

6. The psychology service at Wheatfield prison is inadequate. [6.1 Page 49]
7. Distalgesic tablets should be kept in a locked cabinet. [6.4 (J) Page 56]
8. It would seem that the attendance by the Dentist of one full day and one morning a week should be increased. [6.4 (k) Page 56]
9. The number of staff support officers at Wheatfield Prison should be increased immediately. [6.11 Page 68/69]
10. The study which was carried out by consultants McAllister Devereux Keating should be implemented and address the emergency lighting, signage, evacuation assembly points, plus the access for fire brigade in an emergency. [10.4 Page 84/85 10.12 Page 89]

12. CONCLUSION

Wheatfield is a modern prison with many very good facilities. The work/training workshops are very spacious and some of them are being extended further with the new buildings that are taking place. There is a very elaborate new laundry being built which will replace the existing laundry and it is planned that it will also meet the laundry needs of both Wheatfield and Cloverhill Prison when operational. There are good educational and library facilities.

The training kitchen and general kitchen are very impressive and all of the hygiene awards that has been achieved is a credit to all concerned within these areas.

The fact that it is a relatively new prison and that in-cell sanitation was installed at the time of building helps considerably towards maintenance. The entire flooring of the prison is tiled and it is very hygienically maintained. The maintenance staff carry out any necessary repairs promptly resulting in its good appearance and it is functioning very well. The design of the buildings allows for repair work to be carried out without disrupting the running of the prison or having to leave the cells concerned unoccupied, which is a great advantage compared to some of the older prisons.

The necessary staff refresher training is very well up to date except for a small section of security refresher training. Familiarisation in the use of fire hoses/extinguishers and fire evacuation drills are carried out regularly. No other developmental staff training has taken place except a small number who are pursuing degree courses and some others who participated in interviewing skills course.

The Inspectorate looked at the business plans for Wheatfield for 2003 and while a considerable number of the targets have been achieved quite a few are still outstanding. The reasons given in some cases were that committees were formed but were unable to meet due to staff shortage, others depended on filling vacancies, while others were dependent on

central policy not being available from headquarters. Some of the targets set were unmeasurable in that the completion date was referred to as “on-going” and it may be better if more definite targets were set. Sentence management and the connect project has not been introduced as yet.

There appear to be some dissatisfaction among the prisoners concerning the operation of the parole board in that there is a long delay from the time of the interview until the board findings are announced. They also complain that if one’s case is deferred for review to some time in the future, there are no suggestions or guidelines to follow in the meantime in order to improve one’s self for the next review.

The prison has established two “drug free” units and both the management and the Probation and Welfare Service state that there is a demand for at least another one or two units to become drug free. Methadone maintenance is being prescribed to approx 70 prisoners per day and there is a need for additional staff to assist monitoring and managing of the programme. The problem of illegal drugs getting into the prison is a cause of concern. Some are being thrown over the boundary wall with such force that they are landing in the middle of the exercise yards. The area outside of the boundary wall does not come under the control of the prison service and perhaps discussions could take place with the local gardai to see if this problem could be solved.

The staff work an average of 11 hours overtime per person per week and the daily average on sick leave is 18. Staff turnover in the year was 121 and there are 122 at present seeking a transfer to other prisons. Most of the reasons for the transfer requests are for to reside nearer their homes. There were no escapes from the prison during the year, however there were two escapes of prisoners from escorts.

There are good sanitary, showering and laundry changing facilities for the prisoners. They have the use of telephones, can write and receive letters, and have a t.v in each cell. There were 325 prisoners on disciplinary reports (P.19s) in the previous 3 months with 56 of those forfeiting remission arising from the reports. Two of the reports were for assault on staff while 46 were for assault on fellow prisoners. 50 prisoners were reported for smuggling or attempting to smuggle illegal substances into the prison while 5 of those were placed on screen visits as result of the reports (P.19's). 98 prisoners were placed in the segregated cells (i.e strip or padded cells) in the previous 3 months, 14 of which were for security reasons while 84 were for medical reasons. Some were held there for an hour or two, others for a day or more, while the longest time spend there by a prisoner was 7 days. These strip or padded cells appear to be used very frequently for a population of 378 prisoners and the Inspector is concerned regarding such high number being placed there.

Prisoners on committal are interviewed within one working day of arrival for activity placement and unless excused by the doctor, he will be assigned a

place of work or as described a “pick and mix” option. This is part time work and part time education. Every prisoner is assigned a work/education location and therefore no prisoners are walking around the exercise yards all day doing nothing as happens in some other prisons. However, some of the prisoners assigned to workshop areas do not appear to be fully engaged in the work within the area.

The prison is managed very much like two prisons within the one complex as a result of having to keep those described as “under protection” away from the “ordinary” prisoners. They may be under protection for various reasons e.g cannot associate or mix with other prisoners, failed drug deals, family feuds, nature of their offence, witnesses in court cases etc. This leads to management having to provide double services and also to manage the time each group are attending work, education, church services, etc which puts additional burden and costs on the management.

The prison is operated very much by the multidisciplinary approach, which is, all of the various agencies working within it, work with local management in the development of the various programmes and tasks. All of these groups complement each other and help in no small way towards achieving their end result, which should be very much prisoner focused.

There appeared to be quite good morale among the staff and a good relationship appears to exist between the prisoners and the staff. Overall it is a well run prison.