



Ombudsman for Children's Office

Children's Rights Behind Bars: Where are we now?

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Role of OCO

- ▶ Dual statutory mandate
 - Independent, impartial complaints handling
 - Promotion of children's rights
 - Monitor and advise on legislation and public policy
 - Promote awareness of children's rights, including among children
 - Consult children and highlight their concerns
 - Undertake or commission research

Children in detention OCO remit

- ▶ **Investigations into the administration of prisons – excluded by 2002 Act**
- ▶ **Calls for an extension of remit**
 - From 2005 onwards, the OCO recommended that St Patrick's Institution be included in its investigative remit, which was raised by way of:
 - Annual reports,
 - UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
 - Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

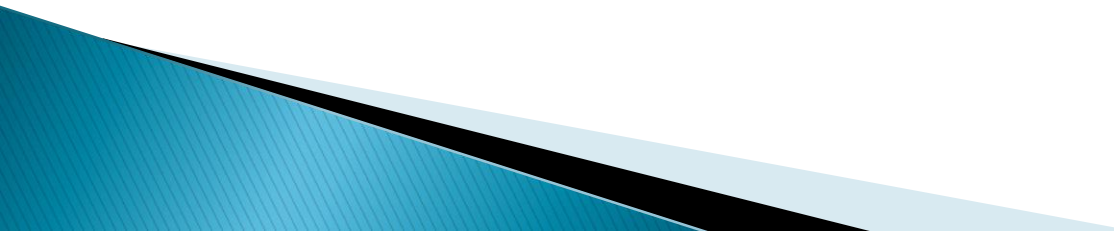
Consultation with young people

- ▶ **Report: Young people in St Patrick's Institution**
 - A consultation project into the lives of young people in St Patrick's Institution
 - A DVD to highlight the views of young people in St Pat's
 - An information booklet dealing with young people's first night in the prison
 - An information booklet explaining the prison regime and rules

Extension of the 2002 Act

- In June 2012, Ministerial Order to extend remit to include prisons and therefore St. Patrick's Institution.
S.I. No. 210/2012 – Ombudsman for Children Act 2002 (Section 11(2)(a)) Order 2012.
- Complaints of young people under 18 detained in St. Patrick's Institution and Wheatfield Prison and for up to two years after could now be examined.
- Since 2012, complaints have been investigated by OCO and active engagement in this area continues

Concerns raised with OCO by young people and advocates

- ▶ Contact with parent when serious injuries and assault had occurred
 - ▶ Adequacy of medical treatment
 - ▶ Withholding of family open visits
 - ▶ Mental health of young people
 - ▶ Unfair Treatment by staff
 - ▶ Access to complaint handling
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OCO & Oberstown

OCO seeking to engage with management and staff to

- ▶ raise awareness of need for human rights based approach
- ▶ ensure access to effective complaint handling

OCO plan to further engage with young people