

Report on an Inspection of Castlereagh
Prison by the Inspector of Prisons
Judge Michael Reilly
2008 - 2009

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Presented to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform
pursuant to Part 5 of the Prisons Act 2007.

11th March 2009

Judge Michael Reilly
Inspector of Prisons

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Chapter 1

Acknowledgements

- 1.1 I received a high level of co-operation from all people involved in my inspection of Castlerea Prison. I would like to thank in particular Governor Daniel Scannell, Deputy Governor Ethel Gavin and Assistant Governor William Reilly, their staff and others who provide services there. I would particularly like to thank the prisoners and their visitors who spoke freely to me and my team. I would also like to thank all those who are not mentioned in this short acknowledgement and who in one way or another assisted me in my inspection.

- 1.2 I am indebted to my small team not only for their attention to office duties but also for their diligence in carrying out inspections sometimes during unsocial hours. They are: - Mr. James Woods, Ms. Linda Larkin who is in charge of administration in my office and Ms. Aoife Watters my researcher. They are a dedicated, interested and cohesive team who worked long hours and for that I thank them.

Chapter 2

Introduction

- 2.1. Castlerea Prison was originally built as a psychiatric hospital and sanatorium. It was used for this purpose for 44 years. The Department of Justice purchased the property and opened it as a penal institution in December 1996. Castlerea Prison is a closed prison for male offenders over the age of 18. It is both a remand and a committal prison for Connaught and Counties Longford, Cavan and Donegal. The prison is divided into two sections: - a) the main prison which is a medium security unit, and, b) the Grove which operates as a self contained low security unit. The building of a new unit is currently in progress. It is anticipated that this building will open in mid 2009.

- 2.2. My predecessor, the late Mr. Justice Kinlen, undertook an initial inspection of Castlerea Prison in 2004 and a follow-up inspection in 2006. Since 2006 two new houses have opened in “The Grove”, each accommodating 6 prisoners. The houses have been built to a high standard. Two additional Probation Officers and two Addiction Counsellors have been appointed. The Assistant Industrial Supervisor positions in the computer and carpentry workshops have been filled. Both are fully operational and produce work to a high standard. A Chief Nurse Officer has been appointed. Despite Judge Kinlen’s recommendations no additional seating had been provided in the prisoner’s recreation rooms until early December 2008 (after my inspections and recommendations to management). The library is effectively non-operational. A librarian has been appointed from Roscommon County Council. The librarian is due to commence work early in 2009.

- 2.3. The actual bed capacity of the prison as of the 12th February 2009 was 230. Included in this figure are 3 beds in the Special Care Unit and 48 beds in the houses in the Grove. The cells in the Special Care Unit are not intended for use as permanent accommodation and the Grove is not operating at full

capacity. The main prison is often overcrowded. This overcrowding leads to prisoners being accommodated on floors in cells and in rooms with no facilities. I deal with this in greater detail at paragraphs 5.9 and 5.10. This is unacceptable and is in contravention of international best practice.

- 2.4. The Grove contains 8 individual houses. During my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) 2 houses were being renovated. On 10th December 2008 the renovations were almost complete.
- 2.5. The new unit was designed for 64 prisoners – all in single cells. 12 of these cells were to be designated as The Challenging Behaviour Unit. I have been informed that the intention is that most cells in this new unit will be doubled up. I will deal with the issue of design capacity *vis a vis* bed capacity in later reports.
- 2.6. The average daily capacity for July 2008 was 222 prisoners.
- 2.7. I have pointed out at paragraph 2.1 that Castlereagh Prison is both a remand and a committal prison. International best practice recommends that remand prisoners should be kept separate from sentenced prisoners¹. There is a separate unit for remand prisoners with a capacity for 20 prisoners. These prisoners have their own exercise yard and are kept separate from sentenced prisoners as far as possible. On the day of my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) there were 40 prisoners on remand. The numbers on remand always exceed the bed capacity in the remand unit. The additional prisoners were accommodated in the main cellular wings with sentenced prisoners. I was informed that the initial intention was that the new unit under construction would be used to accommodate remand prisoners but now I understand that this may not be the position.

¹ Article 10(2) (a) International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, Rules 8(b) & 85(1) United Nations Standard Minimum Rules, Principle 8 Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment

- 2.8. The facilities and services for prisoners in Castlerea Prison are satisfactory. The education unit provides a variety of classes for prisoners, many of which lead to accreditation. I deal in paragraph 8.6 with the problem of prisoners not attending classes on time.
- 2.9. Four workshops are currently in operation in the main prison. I was disappointed to find during my inspections that numbers of prisoners were idle.
- 2.10. The tuck shop is open five days a week and stocks a wide range of food stuffs and supplies.
- 2.11. The gym is well-equipped and prisoners have ample access to it.
- 2.12. A library is situated in the main prison. It is stocked with a wide range of books. It is rarely open.
- 2.13. Provision of healthcare services is satisfactory.
- 2.14. Management is committed to maintaining the prison drug-free. There is evidence of some illicit drug use in Castlerea Prison which is referred to at paragraph 5.39. There is no dedicated drug-free area in the prison. There are no methadone maintenance programmes in operation. This position is supported by both management and medical staff. Pressure exists from prisoners to introduce a methadone programme into Castlerea Prison.
- 2.15. On 24th September 2008, protection prisoners and sex offenders accounted for 15% of the prisoner population in Castlerea Prison. These prisoners are some of the most vulnerable and often require a separate regime to the majority of the prison population. I was informed by the management that it is not the policy of the prison to segregate sex-offenders.
- 2.16. A positive atmosphere was observed throughout the prison. Staff/ prisoner relations were good. The management was constructive in its administration

of the prison and appears willing to adopt new initiatives such as the “You’re Equal” mentoring project.

- 2.17. There are many positives about Castlereas Prison such as the excellent work being done in the workshops, the waste management area, the recreational and educational facilities and the general care taken by officers of the prisoners. It was therefore disappointing to find that a degree of complacency seemed to exist regarding the general cleanliness of the prison. When I raised this issue with management it was quickly rectified.
- 2.18. Staff/ management relations are generally good. I discuss in paragraph 4.3 the desirability of holding monthly multi-disciplinary meetings as the provision of information between numbers of the service providers in the prison appeared to be disjointed.
- 2.19. When the new wing opens it will exert pressure on the provision of services and on the work force.
- 2.20. Overcrowding is a common factor in all prisons. This is not a local management problem. Where overcrowding exists as discussed in paragraph 5.11, this becomes a significant problem which could lead to serious incidents. I am acutely aware of this and will refer to the problem in later reports.
- 2.21. Two prisoners in the prison are, for historical reasons, accommodated separately from others. I have visited and spoken to the parties concerned and am of the view that there are no issues in relation to their detention which I need refer to at this time.
- 2.22. Overall I am satisfied that the management in Castlereas Prison is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for the prisoners in its custody.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1. I am obliged under Section 32 (2) of the Prisons Act 2007 when reporting on a prison to deal with, in particular:-

- (a) **its general management, including the level of its effectiveness and efficiency,**
- (b) **the conditions and general health and welfare of prisoners detained there,**
- (c) **the general conduct and effectiveness of persons working there,**
- (d) **compliance with national and international standards including in particular the prison rules,**
- (e) **programmes and other facilities available and the extent to which prisoners participate in them,**
- (f) **security, and**
- (g) **discipline.**

3.2. It is important to note that this report does not reflect one particular point in time at Castlerea Prison; instead it is reflective of an ongoing inspection and consultative process over a number of months. Therefore, this report offers an accurate representation of the conditions in Castlerea Prison.

3.3. Initially my team and I carried out an unannounced inspection of the entire Castlerea Prison estate on 29/30th July 2008. This entailed carrying out an in-

depth analysis of all areas of the prison and talking to prisoners and members of staff. Subsequently a letter detailing the areas of concern identified during the inspection was forwarded to the prison requesting a response to the issues raised. A questionnaire followed requesting additional information which I felt was required in order to properly assess the prison. Letters were sent to the Irish Prison Service outlining those concerns which were of relevance to them and requesting a reply. Responses were received from all.

- 3.4. An announced follow-up inspection took place on the 24th and 25th September 2009. During this inspection I took the opportunity to talk to prisoners, visitors, the visiting committee, the senior managers, the Prison Officers Association, members of staff, the chaplain, teachers, the doctor, the nurses, the dentist, the psychologist, the psychiatrist, the Probation Officers, the Addiction Counsellors and miscellaneous others who provide services to the prison or to the prisoners.
- 3.5. The issues of concern highlighted during the initial inspection were re-examined to assess the progress made in the intervening period.
- 3.6. During my inspection on 24/25th September 2008 I identified further matters which I raised with the Governor at the conclusion of this inspection and subsequently by letter.
- 3.7. Further unannounced inspections were undertaken on the 20th October 2008, the 10th December 2008, a night inspection on the 18th December 2008 with a final inspection on 12th February 2009. The purpose of these inspections was to confirm that Castlerea Prison was still being run satisfactorily having regard to my earlier observations. The inspection also afforded the opportunity to clarify any other outstanding issues.
- 3.8. At all times, having identified issues of concern, I endeavoured to seek a resolution. I have dealt with all matters of major concern in this report. The majority of my concerns have been addressed. In this regard I received total

cooperation from the Governor, Management and staff in Castlerea Prison. Throughout this report I have included recommendations where appropriate.

- 3.9. I have explained to the Governor of Castlerea Prison that I intend making unannounced visits to the prison on a regular basis throughout my tenure as Inspector of Prisons even if these do not form part of a full inspection. I will be referring to such visits in my annual reports.
- 3.10. The remainder of this report is a detailed analysis of my inspection of Castlerea Prison. For ease of reference, it is divided into seven sections (Chapters 4 to 10) which mirror my obligations under Section 32(2) of the Prisons Act 2007.
- 3.11. Throughout this report reference is made to various time lines. These are not in all cases the same time lines. The reason for the disparity is that information was requested at different times throughout the inspection process.
- 3.12. Under Section 32(2) (a) of the Prison Act 2007 I am obliged, when reporting on a particular prison, to deal with its general management, including the level of its effectiveness and efficiency. Throughout this report I deal with management matters and, therefore, Chapter 4 deals only with those matters which pertain to the effectiveness and efficiency of Castlerea Prison.

Chapter 4

The General Management of Castlerea Prison

Effectiveness

- 4.1. The management and staff were willing to address all issues that I raised with them arising from my inspections. A number of the issues were local in nature and could be attended to directly by the Governor and management. Management is to be commended for its co-operation with my Office and also for its efforts in improving the conditions for both prisoners and staff in Castlerea Prison.
- 4.2. Management was positive in its approach towards the operation of the prison. It has implemented new initiatives of benefit to prisoners, both whilst they are in custody and following their release. Examples of such initiatives are referred to in many parts of this report.
- 4.3. During my inspections it appeared that the interaction and the provision of information between numbers of service providers in the prison was disjointed. Some of these services appeared to function virtually in isolation from each other and from prison management. I was informed that no multi-disciplinary meetings have taken place in the prison for a significant number of months.
- 4.4. One member of staff undertook a senior management course in the past year.

Recommendations

- **Monthly multi-disciplinary meetings must be held. All meetings between heads of services must be minuted. (para. 4.3)**

Efficiency

- 4.5. The implementation of the targets contained in Castlerea Prison's 2006 Business Plan (being the most recent Business Plan) is proceeding. During the period 1st January 2008 to 8th August 2008, four fire evacuation exercises were carried out. During each exercise one area of the prison estate was evacuated.
- 4.6. The Interim Integrated Sentence Management System as envisaged in target 4 of the Business Plan 2006 has not been implemented. I will deal comprehensively with the whole question of sentence management in subsequent reports.
- 4.7. A system for recording of assaults in the prisoner population (target 2.2 of the Business Plan 2006) has not been implemented in Castlerea Prison. An incident book does exist which records *inter alia* details of assaults on prisoners.
- 4.8. On my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) I was informed that the computers in the General Office operated slowly. I brought this to the attention of the Irish Prison Service. The computers were replaced as part of the Irish Prison Service's overall plan to replace the computer system throughout the Irish prison estate. I was informed during follow-up inspections that some teething problems exist.
- 4.9. Each prisoner's details are recorded on an individual computer file in the General Office which I found to be comprehensive.
- 4.10. I was satisfied that the recording of prisoners' misconduct reports (P 19's) was both consistent and adequately detailed. The adjudication sections of these reports were completed correctly with the final decisions and any sanctions imposed clearly set out.

4.11. The official prisoners' complaint book is in use in the prison. Since its introduction in early 2008, 11 prisoners' complaints have been recorded. At the time of my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) all relevant details were not being recorded, such as the individual against who the complaint was made. Conclusions were not recorded in a number of complaints. I notified the prison management of my concerns. During subsequent inspections the entries had been rectified and I was assured that all future entries will be comprehensive.

Recommendations:

- **A dedicated system for recording assaults on prisoners must be introduced immediately. (para. 4.7)**
- **Any remaining faults in the computer system must be rectified. (para. 4.8)**

Chapter 5

The conditions and general health and welfare of prisoners in Castlerea Prison

Conditions

- 5.1. The stated bed capacity as per the daily returns from the Irish Prison Service shows a capacity of 228. On 12th February 2009 the actual bed capacity of Castlerea Prison was 230 (including 3 beds in the Special Care Unit). 48 of these beds are in the Grove. The actual bed capacity of the Main Prison was 182 on that date. Castlerea Prison opened in 1996 when prisoners were transferred to the Grove. In 1998 the main building opened. Its design capacity was for 127 single cells on the three landings, 4 treble and 2 single cells in the Remand Unit and 5 single cells in the Special Care Unit, giving a bed capacity of 146. All cells have in cell sanitation. The cells in the Special Care Unit should not be used for accommodation purposes but 3 are counted at present when calculating the present bed capacity. Since 1998 one cell on A1 Landing has been decommissioned. This means that the design capacity of the Main Prison (including 3 cells in the Special Care Unit) is 143 beds. To achieve the actual bed capacity of 182, 35 single cells have been converted to double cells and 4 treble cells have been converted to 4 man cells.
- 5.2. I will deal with the question of overcrowding in my Annual Report. Specifically I will set out my views on the design capacity of prisons *vis a vis* the bed capacity.
- 5.3. Prison work is undertaken by the prisoners as per the Irish Prison Rules. Prisoners are selected to work in the different areas based on their behaviour and suitability. Prisoners work in the kitchen, the laundry, the reception, some

complete paint jobs around the prison, some work in the various workshops and others maintain the prison and its surroundings.

- 5.4. I was concerned to find on my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) that the prison was generally dirty. The shower areas on the main landings were dirty. There were no benches or hooks for prisoners to place their clothes on. The shower areas needed to be tiled. The slop hoppers were filthy. Many walls in the public areas and on the landings required painting. Many cells needed painting. The call bells in a number of cells were not working. Wiring for electrical appliances in a number of cells was exposed. Some cells were generally dirty. I brought these issues to the attention of the prison management. During my subsequent inspections the shower areas had been tiled, were clean, freshly painted and timber laths were fixed to the walls for prisoners to place their clothes on. The slop hoppers had been cleaned. A painting programme had been put in place. The call bells had been repaired. The wiring for electrical appliances had been attended to. The cells were generally tidy and clean. I was informed that all of these issues were and are attended to on an ongoing basis. However I am now satisfied that procedures have been put in place to ensure that attention is paid to ongoing painting of cells, the cleaning of the shower areas, the maintenance of call bells and the general cleanliness of the landings and cells. There is no reason that this should not be so as this work is done by prisoners with the exception of the maintenance of equipment etc. I will keep these issues under review and will refer to them if necessary in subsequent reports.
- 5.5. The stairs leading to the landings were dirty on the date of my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008). Having brought this to the attention of management the situation has been rectified to my satisfaction.
- 5.6. There is a large Reception area in the prison. All prisoners are initially brought to this area where they are processed. They are given packs containing clothing, bedding, toiletries and an information booklet. This complies with the Irish Prison Rules. The prisoners' lockers are located in this area. Due to the increase in the prison population there are not sufficient

lockers for all prisoners. This, I am informed, will be addressed when the new wing opens. There are three holding cells and two showers in the reception area. The holding cells were dirty on my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008). Prison management were informed of this and the cells were painted. Prisoners in some sections of these cells could not be observed from the observation hatch due to the shape of the cells. As a result of my intervention management have now installed mirrors to rectify this situation. On a number of occasions that I inspected these cells none of the call bells were working. This caused me serious concern. Prisoners detained in special cells, particularly when a number of prisoners are detained together, must always be able to contact an officer without delay. I informed the prison management of this problem. On my inspection on 10th December 2008 new call bells had been fitted in all three cells and were working.

- 5.7. The Remand Unit comprises two double cells and four cells with a capacity for four prisoners in each. The maximum bed capacity of the Remand Unit is 20. On the date of my initial inspection there were 40 prisoners on remand in the prison. The additional prisoners have to be accommodated in the main prison block with sentenced prisoners. This contravenes International best practice. During all inspections the cells in this unit were clean and tidy but needed painting. There are three showers in this area which were clean during all inspections. There were no hooks or benches provided for prisoners to hang their clothes. Wooden laths have now been provided. There is a separate exercise yard for prisoners on remand. It was clean during my inspections. Remand prisoners can avail of gym and school facilities.
- 5.8. The Special Care Unit comprises 3 observation cells, 1 cladded cell, 1 strip cell and a recreation room. During my initial inspection (29th July 2008) I found one of the special observation cells was filthy. The cell had been vacated 2 days before my inspection but had still not been cleaned. There was blood in a vessel and on the floor. I accept that this related to a medical condition that the last prisoner occupying it suffered from. Waste material was scattered around the room. This constituted a most serious lapse on the part of the prison. This room was clean on all subsequent inspections.

- 5.9. I found three prisoners in the recreation room of the Special Care Unit. They were lying on mattresses without pillows. They had no furniture. They had a television. There was no in cell sanitation. They relied on three cardboard chamber pots. The room was dirty and dark. They had no washing facilities. I accept that these three prisoners had certain difficulties which dictated that they should remain apart from the rest of the population in the prison and that they were happy to be in this room. These prisoners had one hour exercise each day. They did not have access to the workshops or to the school. One of the prisoners had been in the recreation room for approximately 3 months and the other two prisoners for lesser periods. Despite the personal difficulties that these prisoners may have had their detention in the circumstances that I found them in could not be condoned in any civilised society.
- 5.10. There are two holding rooms in the main building that are used to accommodate new committals when the prison is operating above maximum bed capacity. The larger room is used to accommodate up to 8 prisoners and the smaller room 6 prisoners. Prisoners are given mattresses to lie on. Some of the mattresses provided for prisoners that I saw were badly soiled. When I first inspected these rooms they were dirty. They have now been cleaned and painted. There is no in cell sanitation. Prisoners have to use cardboard chamber pots. In these circumstances the ventilation in these rooms is not adequate for this number of people. This is unacceptable. The call bells in both rooms were working each time I tested them. Areas in these rooms could not be seen by the officer in charge when looking either through the window or through the observation hatch. As a result of my intervention new convex mirrors have recently been installed enabling the officer to observe all areas of the room from the corridor.
- 5.11. The circumstances in which these holding rooms are utilized are unacceptable. Prisoners are at their most vulnerable following committal and so should be placed in suitable accommodation which takes account of their individual needs. Detaining a group of prisoners together like this is contrary to

international best practice². This practice has the potential to lead to very serious incidents.

- 5.12. When these two holding rooms are full the recreation room in the Special Care Unit is used to accommodate the overflow. The cells in the reception area were used to accommodate the overflow when the two holding rooms and the recreation room in the Special Care Unit were full. Just as I consider the above holding cells to be unsuitable for accommodating a considerable number of prisoners the cells in the Special Care Unit and in the Reception area are also unsuitable.
- 5.13. I brought my concerns to the attention of management. I was informed that the use of the holding rooms would be curtailed and such rooms would be used in future only if acute overcrowding was to occur. I am disappointed to report that despite my concerns these rooms are still being used. Between 1st October 2008 and 10th December 2008 they have been used on 38 occasions. On the night of 14th November 2008, according to the prison records, 17 prisoners were detained in these holding rooms. Between 10th December 2008 and 12th February 2009, these rooms have been in constant use to accommodate overcrowding.
- 5.14. Since my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) the holding cells in the Reception area have not been used to accommodate prisoners overnight. They are used to accommodate committals and discharge prisoners only.
- 5.15. Currently cells on the landings are being doubled up. Surplus prisoners are sleeping on mattresses on the floor until an appropriate place is located for the individual prisoner. Whilst this situation is not ideal I consider it an improvement on the previous situation provided a risk assessment has been undertaken to identify the particular needs of the individual prisoner and to

² Rule 9 United Nations Standards Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Rules 18(5), (6) & (7) Recommendation R (2006) 2 of the Committee of Ministers on the European Prison Rules, European Court of Human Rights- *Edwards v UK* (2002)

identify what, if any, risk such prisoner poses to himself, to other prisoners or to members of staff.

- 5.16. There are two recreation rooms for all the prisoners in the main prison. They are located on Level 3. These were extremely dirty and untidy looking during my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008). One room had 6 plastic chairs and a television. A pool table occupied the second recreation room. I requested that extra chairs and tables be sourced for prisoners' use. At the time of my announced follow-up inspection (24/25th September 2008) the rooms had been painted and cleaned but extra chairs and tables had not been provided. During further follow-up inspections the walls were again badly marked. I appreciate that the paint-work in these rooms is difficult to maintain. I suggested that seating around the walls be provided. I was informed that this would not be provided. By the 10th December 2008 a number of extra chairs and tables had been provided.
- 5.17. The kitchen is large and bright. It was clean during all my inspections. Castlerea Prison has achieved the Emerald and Sapphire standards in catering. The food is prepared in the kitchen area and then transferred to heated trolleys. The trolleys are taken to the landings where the food is served to the prisoners. There is a 28 day rolling menu in operation. Arrangements are made to accommodate prisoners with special dietary requirements or where religious beliefs require the special purchase and preparation of food. When the new unit opens the equipment in the kitchen, including the trolleys, will not be sufficient to cater for the increase in the population. I have been informed by the Irish Prison Service that the request for additional equipment will be given consideration in the context of current budgetary constraints.
- 5.18. The kitchen laundry is adjacent to the kitchen. One prisoner works here, washing and ironing the kitchen whites. On my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) the washing machine was not working properly. I brought this to the attention of management. The machine has been replaced.

- 5.19. The tuck shop was impressive. It was well stocked with a varied range of food stuffs. Any item, within reason, can be sourced for a prisoner through the officers who run the tuck shop. Daily papers and magazines are available. The opening times are adequate to meet all prisoners' needs. The storage facilities for the tuck shop are barely adequate at present.
- 5.20. Prisoners in the Grove and the Special Care Unit can order from the tuck shop and an officer will deliver these orders. This system functions effectively.
- 5.21. In Castlereagh Prison, prisoners are entitled to make two telephone-calls a week. Prisoners in the Grove receive and make calls from the Officer's house. The prisoners' telephone area in the main building was unsatisfactory at the time of my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008). There were three telephones lying on the floor at the entrance to Landing 3. These were the only telephones available to the entire prison population in the main prison. I do not consider the number of telephones adequate for the number of prisoners who are permitted to use them at any one time. There were neither seats nor hoods to give prisoners privacy. The other prisoners and officers in the area could hear the telephone conversations. I brought these concerns to the attention of management. As a result wall booths were installed. Seating has not been provided. The number of telephones has not been increased.
- 5.22. The houses in the Grove are built to a high standard. Between 2 and 8 prisoners are accommodated in each house. During my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) 6 houses in the Grove were occupied. 2 were undergoing renovations. Every prisoner has his own room and some have their own shower. Each house has a kitchen and living room. The prisoners do their own washing and can cook if they wish. There is a main kitchen and dining room in the Grove where the prisoners must receive their main meals. Both kitchen and dining room were bright, spacious, clean and tidy on each inspection.
- 5.23. The atmosphere in the Grove was companionable. The prisoners interacted well with each other and with the staff. The prisoners appreciated the semi-

open regime that operates in the Grove. It was evident that the prisoners took pride in the Grove and felt a responsibility for the area. The open areas were well maintained. The prisoners can use the grounds for recreational purposes during recreational periods.

- 5.24. The importance of providing such a step-down facility for prisoners cannot be over-emphasised. This area was designed to promote a community like environment. Prisoners in this area are of a low risk to themselves and others and are therefore subject to fewer restrictions. Prisoners are given the opportunity to take partial responsibility for their own lives and are equipped with skills that will be required of them following their release. Such a step-down facility is an important feature of sentence management plans.
- 5.25. At all times there are a number of protection prisoners in Castlereia Prison. Prisoners are primarily placed on protection as a result of gang membership or following a threat. Some prisoners ask to be placed on protection. This cohort of prisoners presents logistical problems for both the prison management and the staff. Prisoners on protection are on 23 hour lock up. They are afforded one hour's outdoor recreation. They are not afforded an opportunity to attend education, the gym or workshops. On the 24th September 2008 there were 14 prisoners on protection in Castlereia Prison. I will deal in greater detail with the problems associated with protection prisoners in later reports.
- 5.26. No segregation policy exists in relation to sex offenders. Despite this policy the *de facto* position is that a degree of segregation exists. These prisoners work almost exclusively in one of the workshops and they attend educational classes at night. They can feel intimidated by the other prisoners and can be the target for abuse and physical violence. I accept that these prisoners are free to work in any workshop when a vacancy arises and they are free to choose when they wish to attend education or recreation. However, many of the sex offenders spend long periods in self imposed custody in their cells. I will deal in greater detail with this aspect of prison life in later reports.

- 5.27. All mail for prisoners is delivered to the Censor's office. Every item of prisoners' mail received and dispatched is recorded on computer. Mail for prisoners is opened and read unless it is from a person or body specified in Rule 44 of the Irish Prison Rules. Prisoners normally receive their mail on the day it is delivered. Money or parcels containing clothing or other effects are recorded. Prisoners can send as many letters as they wish. I received no complaints from prisoners regarding the receiving or sending of mail.
- 5.28. Prior to visitors entering the prison grounds they wait in a building outside the prison gates and are escorted onto the grounds by a prison officer. The facilities in this area are excellent. There is a pleasant atmosphere and a good rapport between the prison officers and the visitors.
- 5.29. A Family Resource Centre is located outside the gates of the Prison. Here visitors are offered refreshments and advice while waiting. The Centre is staffed by the Roscommon Partnership Company, the Citizen Information Centre and volunteers.
- 5.30. There are open and screened visits for prisoners in the main prison. Children are permitted in the visiting area. While noisy if busy, the facilities for the open visits are adequate. There are two screened booths. I conducted a test and found that it was very difficult to converse in these booths.
- 5.31. The facilities in the visiting area in the Grove are very good. Visits take place in a large bright spacious room where prisoners and their visitors sit around tables, allowing them a considerable degree of privacy. Tea and coffee facilities are available. Outside this visiting area there is an enclosed yard where children can play.
- 5.32. I received no complaints from either prisoners or visitors regarding the treatment of visitors by prison staff. I observed the interaction between staff and visitors and the staff were professional and respectful in their dealings with visitors.

Recommendations:

- **Clean mattresses must be provided for all prisoners. (para. 5.10)**
- **The holding rooms and the recreation room in the Special Care Unit must not be used to accommodate numbers of prisoners at any one time. (paras. 5.10 & 5.12)**
- **If prisoners are to be doubled up a risk assessment must be carried out. (para. 5.12)**
- **The facilities in the kitchen must be upgraded to deal with the increased population when the new unit opens. (para. 5.17)**
- **Adequate storage for tuck shop supplies must be provided to cater for the extra prisoner population when the new wing opens. (para. 5.19)**
- **Additional telephones must be provided for prisoners use. (para. 5.21)**
- **The audio system in the screened visiting booths must be upgraded as a matter of urgency. (para. 5.30)**

General Health

- 5.33. A doctor (from a group practice) attends the prison for approximately three hours every weekday. A doctor from this practice is always on call and will attend the prison if necessary. During the weekend the doctor attends the prison to examine prisoners following committal. Ten nurses are employed. Four nurses job share. The nurses are under the direction of one chief nurse officer. Two nurses are on day surgery duty. One nurse works on night surgery duty.
- 5.34. The doctor's surgery is situated on the second floor. There is a lift beside the doctor's surgery. While this lift is used to transport the food trolleys it can be used by prisoners to get to the doctor. The doctor usually visits prisoners in their cells if they are unable to reach the surgery.
- 5.35. The surgery consists of two medium sized rooms. I was initially informed that the surgery was to be refurbished in the coming months. I was subsequently

informed that this project has been withdrawn by the Irish Prison Service. It is the ongoing responsibilities of the Irish Prison Service to ensure that all necessary medical equipment which may be required will be provided to enable the medical staff provide a standard of healthcare which is equivalent to that available in the community.

- 5.36. The medical staff informed me during my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) that the computer system in the surgery was very slow. A new computer system has recently been installed.
- 5.37. When a prisoner is transferred to Castlerea Prison from another prison his medical file is forwarded with the escort and is also sent via the computer medical database. The doctor informed me he was satisfied that the Prison Medical Records System functions effectively.
- 5.38. Methadone maintenance programmes are not available to prisoners in Castlerea Prison. It is the Governor's intention to maintain this policy. The staff members in the medical unit are satisfied with this position. The debate concerning the provision of methadone within the Irish Prison Service is part of a larger debate which is of concern not alone to the Prison Service but to the community as a whole. It is not part of my mandate to enter this debate. A drug detoxification programme is available to all new committals. On average 5 or 6 prisoners engage in this programme at any one time.
- 5.39. I was informed by both the management and the medical staff that the use of illicit drugs was not a serious cause for concern in Castlerea Prison. I have reason to believe otherwise. I was informed by prisoners and others that illicit drugs are available in the prison. It was their opinion that two thirds of the population of Castlerea Prison have addiction problems – being addicted to drugs, alcohol or both. During my inspections of Loughan House Open Estate in 2008 I established that 417 prisoners had been transferred from Castlerea Prison to Loughan House in 2007. Of these, 178 tested positive for traces of drugs or refused to be tested on committal to Loughan House. This represented 42.7% of the transfers from Castlerea Prison to Loughan House.

Before prisoners are transferred to Loughan House they are assessed as being low risk prisoners and drug free. I set out in paragraph 2.5 of my report on Loughan House 2008 the factors taken into consideration before a transfer takes place. The assessment is carried out by the Irish Prison Service in conjunction with local management. Management in Castlerea Prison disagree with my assessment as to the prevalence of drugs in the prison. The Governor pointed out that traces of drugs can remain in a person's system for up to two months. He further pointed out that, at times, prisoners are transferred to Loughan House after a short period of time – in some cases after one or two days. I must again reiterate that the Irish Prison Service in consultation with local management makes a determination, in accordance with their criteria, as to the suitability of a person for transfer to Loughan House. This includes an assessment that the prisoner is drug free.

- 5.40. I was informed that the abuse of prescription medication is a serious problem particularly addiction to sleeping tablets. I was further informed that prisoners are on prescribed sleeping tablets before entering Castlerea Prison, either from other prisons or from the community. It is the policy of the medical unit in Castlerea Prison not to prescribe sleeping tablets to prisoners unless exceptional circumstances justify their use.
- 5.41. The management of Castlerea Prison conducted a survey of 230 prisoners and found that 57% of those surveyed were on prescribed high dependency mind altering drugs. (Castlerea Prison Governor's Report 2007).
- 5.42. The medical unit in Castlerea Prison has many links with agencies in the community. The medical staff place great emphasis on maintaining links with outside agencies as such agencies can assist prisoners to re-integrate into the community following their release. This type of interaction with outside agencies is very worthwhile and should be encouraged throughout all sections of the prison service.
- 5.43. A psychiatrist attends Castlerea Prison for approximately 2/3 hours a week. Between 3 and 5 prisoners attend the psychiatrist per week.

- 5.44. A psychologist attends Castlereagh Prison for approximately 3/4 hours a week. Prisoners have to be placed on a waiting list to see the psychologist. On average between 4 and 6 prisoners attend the psychologist per week.
- 5.45. A number of staff commented on the number of prisoners in Castlereagh Prison with mental health problems. The Governor informed me that in his opinion there are, on any one day, a number of prisoners in Castlereagh Prison with serious mental health disorders. This is confirmed in his Annual Report of 2007.
- 5.46. The mental health of persons deprived of their liberty causes me great concern. The Governor informed me that the number of prisoners being diagnosed with some form of personality disorder is continuously increasing. A co-ordinated approach is required to treat all such prisoners and possibly not in the full time confines of a prison setting. This is a topic I will return to in later reports. This cohort of prisoners poses a number of problems for the prison management and the prison health services. Problems can arise regarding the taking of medication, their behaviour, their disrupting influence on the orderly running of the prison and the threat that they sometimes pose to themselves and others. Prisoners with personality disorders require a different type of care to that required by prisoners with mental health disorders. However, all such prisoners must have available to them the same treatment as is available in the community. I will deal with this issue in greater detail in later reports.
- 5.47. In the six month period between March and August 2008, 3 prisoners were transferred as outpatients to the Central Mental Hospital for assessment and 2 prisoners were transferred to Cloverhill prison for assessment by the prison in-reach team from the Central Mental Hospital. No prisoner was transferred as an in-patient to the Central Mental Hospital in the same period.
- 5.48. The dentist attends Castlereagh Prison for approximately 3 hours a week. Prisoners are placed on a waiting list and will generally be seen by the dentist

during his next visit. On average, 14/15 prisoners attend the dentist each week.

5.49. The dental facilities in Castlerea Prison are good. The type of dental treatment received by prisoners is not limited by the length of sentence the prisoner is serving or by reason of his remand status. The majority of dental treatment is carried out in the prison's dentistry. Occasionally a prisoner may be transferred to a Dublin Prison to facilitate necessary treatment by the staff from the Dublin Dental Hospital. I have been informed by the Irish Prison Service that the Service obtains all relevant dental equipment licences and that same are up to date for Castlerea Prison.

5.50. 2 prisoners attempted suicide between 15th March 2008 and 15th August 2008. The suicide awareness group meets quarterly in Castlerea Prison and also meets after any Para suicide incident. There were no deaths in custody in the prison during the period between August 2007 and August 2008.

Recommendations:

- **Ensure the medical unit has all necessary medical equipment. (para. 5.35)**
- **Ensure that prisoners receive the same level of health care in the prison as is available in the community. (para. 5.35)**
- **Ensure that relevant resources, to include appropriate health care professionals, are available to prisoners to give effect to the foregoing recommendation.**

Welfare

5.51. There is a full time lay Catholic Chaplain assigned to Castlerea Prison. She visits the prison daily. There is a Catholic Church on the grounds. Mass is celebrated here every Sunday and on holy days. Provision is made to accommodate the religious practices of prisoners of other denominations.

- 5.52. The Probation team consists of one senior Probation Officer, two Probation Officers and assistance from a clerical officer two days a week. One Probation Officer is assigned to work solely with the prisoners in the Grove and prisoners on remand.
- 5.53. All sex-offenders and life sentenced prisoners are allocated a Probation Officer who works with the offender.
- 5.54. Within the prison context, Probation Officers have a role to play in the rehabilitation of prisoners through addressing offending behaviour and preparing them for life following their release from custody. It is therefore regrettable that during my inspections prisoners committed to Castlerea Prison did not as a matter of course meet with a Probation Officer. I have been informed that the Probation team have communicated with the Governor to the effect that henceforth they are available to meet new committals as a group on a weekly basis as an information sharing exercise.
- 5.55. The Probation Service, as part of a multidisciplinary team, delivers a variety of programmes to prisoners. These programmes include *inter alia* the Lifer Support Group, the Pre- Release Course and an Access to Abstinence Programme.
- 5.56. The Probation Officers arrange meetings with local housing authorities and voluntary organisations to try and obtain accommodation for prisoners following their release. I was informed that difficulties often arise when trying to secure accommodation, particularly where a prisoner has psychiatric problems or where the sentence served was for violent crime. 48 prisoners were placed in accommodation in the 12 month period to 1st August 2008.
- 5.57. Meetings are also arranged with community groups and local health authorities in an endeavour to place prisoners on programmes on their release. I was unable to ascertain the numbers who participated in the 12 months prior to the 1st August 2008.

- 5.58. The Access to Abstinence Programme led to prisoner placements in residential addiction treatment programmes in such places as Harristown House and Merchants Quay. The closure of Harristown House has removed one of the important outlets that played a significant role in this regard.
- 5.59. The Probation Officers work in collaboration with a Linkage Officer (recently appointed) who attends Castlerea Prison one day per week. The Linkage Officers' role is invaluable when addressing the training and employment needs of prisoners and in particular the linking of prisoners to possible job opportunities in the community.
- 5.60. Two Addiction Counsellors work full time in Castlerea Prison. This service is contracted from Merchants Quay Treatment Centre. I intend to deal in greater detail with the role of addiction counsellors in later reports.
- 5.61. Prisoners are referred to the Addiction Counsellors by the Probation Officers, the medical staff and management. Prisoners can request meetings with the Counsellors.
- 5.62. On my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) the Addiction Counsellors had no permanent office or interviewing facilities. As a result of my representations management have made available two rooms for interviewing prisoners. They have also upgraded the office facilities. I am informed that these facilities, which are not altogether adequate, are a temporary measure and when the new unit opens appropriate facilities and accommodation will be provided for the addiction service. I will keep this under review.
- 5.63. The Listeners Scheme operates in the prison. The Samaritans give great assistance in training prisoners as listeners who support other prisoners facing difficulties or problems in their life.
- 5.64. Alcoholics Anonymous and the Samaritans hold weekly sessions in Castlerea Prison for any prisoners who wish to avail of their support. Prisoners can contact the Samaritans at any time.

Recommendations:

- **Prisoners should be seen by a probation officer on committal. (para. 5.54)**
- **When the new unit opens all necessary facilities should be provided for Addiction Counsellors including appropriate interview rooms, access to computer, telephones etc. (para. 5.62)**

Chapter 6

The general conduct and effectiveness of persons working in Castlereia Prison

General Conduct

- 6.1. During the course of my inspections I observed good personal interaction between staff and prisoners. Members of staff were supportive in their dealings with prisoners and placed an emphasis on encouraging prisoners to take responsibility for their own lives while in custody. I consider that staff-prisoner relationships are good.
- 6.2. One prisoner filed a complaint against a staff member between March 2008 and August 2008.
- 6.3. One member of staff appeared before the Governor on an oral disciplinary hearing in the 12 months to 8th August 2008. Within the same period one member of staff made a complaint against another staff member regarding bullying/ harassment.

Recommendations:

- **Management must ensure that all complaints continue to be investigated impartially and relevant records kept of such investigations. (para. 6.2)**

Effectiveness

- 6.4. There was 180 prison staff employed in Castlereia Prison at the time of my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008). An additional 12 staff have been assigned since then. In the twelve months prior to 8th August 2008, 7 staff members retired and 18 members transferred to other prisons.

- 6.5. In 2007, 25,700 working hours were lost due to staff absenteeism. The operation of the prison is therefore often restricted. I was informed that when staff is absent the staff detailed to work in the school, workshops and tuck shop are never redeployed to cover posts affected by such absence. The prisoners substantiated this fact for me. I will deal with this important issue in more detail in the context of absenteeism generally in the prison system in later reports.
- 6.6. I was informed on 12th February 2009 that on that date there were 2 vacant posts for Industrial Supervisors and 3 vacant posts for Assistant Industrial Supervisors. Currently 2 officers are acting up for two of these posts.
- 6.7. Prison officers are obliged to check on prisoners in the Special Care Unit every 15 minutes. There is no paper record kept detailing these 15 minute inspections. I brought this to the attention of management.
- 6.8. A number of staff have undertaken courses on various issues of relevance to the custody of prisoners. 18 staff members undertook a security related course, 5 undertook a suicide prevention course and 25 undertook other relevant courses including *inter alia* anti-bullying and harassment courses. 8 members of staff participated in hygiene courses. 5 staff members are trained in prisoner programme delivery. 3 Industrial Supervisors undertook a forklift course.
- 6.9. Prison officers and prisoners have re-furnished many areas in the Grove including the home economics kitchen. The prison officers involved are to be commended for this positive contribution to improving the prison estate.

Recommendations:

- **The Irish Prison Service must fill all vacant posts without delay. (para. 6.6)**
- **Records should be kept detailing the 15 minute inspections in the Special Care Unit. (para. 6.7)**
- **Training for staff at all levels should be ongoing. (para. 6.8)**
- **Management must satisfy itself that adequate staff numbers are deployed at all times.**

Chapter 7

Compliance with National and International Standards and in particular the Prison Rules

- 7.1. Subject to paragraphs 7.2 and 7.3 Castlerea Prison appeared to be in compliance with national and international standards relating to the treatment of prisoners and conditions in prisons.
- 7.2. Ireland is under an international obligation to keep remand prisoners separate from sentenced prisoners save in exceptional circumstances. As I have pointed out in paragraph 5.7 this is not the situation in Castlerea Prison. I accept that this is not the fault of local management.
- 7.3. The practice of accommodating numbers of newly sentenced or remand prisoners in the two rooms referred to at paragraphs 5.10 & 5.12 dramatically increases the risk of intimidation and violence among these prisoners and is in violation of Ireland's obligations.
- 7.4. On admission to Castlerea Prison prisoners receive a detailed information booklet as per the Irish Prison Rules. Included in this is information relating to prisoners' entitlements and obligations, the Prison Regime and various agencies who offer support. Extracts from the Irish Prison rules are also included.
- 7.5. A copy of the Irish Prison Rules is available for prisoners to view in the Governor's Parade room and the library.
- 7.6. As stated in paragraph 7 of my Interim Report 2008 I intend bringing forward a set of standards for Irish Prisons. These will reflect Ireland's international, regional and domestic obligations.

Recommendations:

- **Castlerea Prison must comply with national and international standards relating to the treatment of prisoners and the maintenance of proper conditions in the prison.**

Chapter 8

Programmes and other facilities available for prisoners and the extent to which prisoners participate in them

Programmes

- 8.1. There are eight full-time and six part-time teachers in the school. An extensive range of subjects is available including, inter alia, English, Maths, Art, History, Computers, Religious Studies, Music, Home Economics, Health and Safety at work, Computer Architecture, Horticulture and Steer Clear (Safe Driver Education Programme). In addition to these subjects, the teachers are involved in delivering a number of extra curricular subjects including parenting classes, a pre-release course run in conjunction with the Probation Service and First Aid instruction.
- 8.2. There is a separate school in the Grove. The same teachers teach in both schools, with 2 providing classes in the Grove in the morning and another 2 in the afternoon. This provides prisoners with continuity in their studies when they are transferred from the main prison to the Grove.
- 8.3. The number of prisoners attending the school that cannot read or write is a larger representation than those who cannot read or write in the general community. In the 12 month period to 1st August 2008, 54 prisoners attended the school who could neither read nor write. In some cases prisoners could only write their names. 4 teachers are involved in remedial teaching providing 50 hours of remedial teaching per week. A number of non- nationals are participating in the ESOL course (English to Speakers of Other Languages) which is now a subject in the school.
- 8.4. In 2008, 5 prisoners sat Open University examinations, 2 prisoners sat the Leaving Certificate examination in English, and 17 students received accreditation in Teagasc, RHS and Steps. A further 75 students sat

examinations in, *inter alia*, City and Guilds and FETAC courses. 91% of students who sat FETAC level 5 examinations received distinctions. As numbers of prisoners are on remand or serving short sentences the school has had to adapt FETAC as the principal form of assessment. The short-time frame-work within which the teachers have to prepare students is better suited to this form of assessment.

- 8.5. During school holidays part-time teachers deliver a recreational programme to prisoners akin to adult educational programmes available in the community. These programmes include subjects popular with the prisoners. These holiday programmes enable the Head Teacher to introduce new subjects on a trial basis to determine whether to include them in the range of everyday school subjects.
- 8.6. My team and I paid particular attention to the times that the school is open. We observed that the teachers are on site from 9.30 am. We also observed that the prisoners who are scheduled to attend class go from the landings initially to the yard and from there to the school. This entails delays and the possibility of prisoners being 'missed'. The same procedure is observed in the afternoons. I have brought this to the attention of management. I was informed by management that security and logistic issues are the reasons for the present system. I will monitor this situation and will refer to it in later reports.
- 8.7. During the summer 2008, 25 prisoners undertook the Safe Pass course and 5 prisoners undertook the forklift course. The forklift pass is required before prisoners can work in the concrete, woodwork and waste management workshops.
- 8.8. 16 prisoners are currently engaged in the National Apprenticeship Professional Cookery Course. This is a professional cookery course delivered by lecturers from Athlone Institute of Technology. The prisoners work in a purpose equipped kitchen. These lecturers give tutorials to the prisoners in a specifically dedicated room beside this kitchen. 8 prisoners are now in their

third and final year. This will be the first group of prisoners to complete this course and it is hoped that participation and graduation in this course will enable them secure worthwhile jobs following their release.

- 8.9. The “You’re Equal” project operated in Castlereagh Prison. It was an initiative aimed at increasing prisoners’ employability prospects. The project was co-financed by the European Social Fund through the EQUAL II Programme, under its employability pillar. 16 organisations, comprising community/voluntary and statutory agencies were involved in the Partnership. The project offered “one to one” personal mentoring and support to prisoners both pre and post release. The mentor acted as a link with the outside agencies. There were two mentors, both are ex- prisoners. The mentors were available to prisoners 24/7 both pre and post release. 15 prisoners were involved in the Project at any one time. The prisoners were selected by a case management team and were usually prisoners with 6 months of a sentence left to serve. This was a very valuable resource for prisoners. It is regrettable that this programme in its original form has expired at the end of 2008 as the funding has terminated.

Recommendations:

- **Management must ensure that prisoners rostered to attend school are brought to the school on time. (para. 8.6)**

Facilities

- 8.10 The school is located on the second floor of the main prison building. There are a number of classrooms of reasonable size, a staff room, the Head Teacher’s office and a tea room for the prisoners to use during break-time. On my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) I found the school dirty. I informed prison management of this and on all follow-up inspections it has been satisfactory.

- 8.11 There is a small school building in the Grove. As referred to at paragraph 6.9 a number of the rooms in this school have been refurbished. All relevant subjects are taught in this school.
- 8.12 There are four workshops for prisoners in the main prison building.
- 8.13 All the internal printing for Castlerea Prison is carried out in the Computer workshop. A monthly Prison Newsletter is prepared and printed. Prisoners and staff can submit stories, poems, quizzes etc. for inclusion. Changes to the prison regime, for example visiting times, are incorporated. Every prisoner receives this newsletter. The Equal Skills, ECDL and advanced ECDL courses are taught in this workshop. A signage machine is located in this workshop. All signs for the prison are manufactured here. It is hoped that this workshop in conjunction with the teachers will print a nationwide prison work/ training newsletter in the future. Such a newsletter would enhance the co-ordination of work/ training services throughout the Irish prison estate.
- 8.14 In the Light Assembly workshop prisoners examine cardboard paint charts for flaws and pack them into boxes. This work is contracted out from a local paint company. The prisoners receive nominal payment for this work based on the volume of the end product. It appeared to me at the time of my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) that the same coterie of prisoners works here every day. I was informed that there is a waiting list for prisoners seeking work in this workshop. This work is monotonous. As I have stated in my Loughan House Open Estate Report (2008), such tedious work should be rotated between prisoners who are identified as suitable candidates thereby ensuring payment to a greater number of prisoners. Prisoners should engage in a number of constructive activities.
- 8.15 The Fabric workshop is located in a large bright spacious room. Prisoners sew patches of material together to make strips and squares for an outside contracting company. The work is of a high quality. When returned to the contracting company this material is made into caps, hats and bags. Prisoners

receive payment for this work. This training and skills required in this workshop are limited and will be of limited benefit to the prisoners on release.

- 8.16 The work produced in the Carpentry workshop is impressive. Prisoners are initially trained by the Industrial Supervisor and start by making simple items and progressing to intricate pieces. The work done by prisoners in this workshop also benefits the local communities by producing, *inter alia*, flower boxes for the tidy towns' competitions. The workshop is certified but there is currently no accreditation course being delivered. Two prisoners who work in the workshop are participating in a FETAC course in woodwork which is delivered through the school.
- 8.17 As I have stated at paragraph 2.15 there is no segregation policy for sex-offenders in the prison. I found, during all my inspections, that sex offenders only worked in one workshop and at times this workshop was not working to capacity. This amounts to *de facto* segregation. I was informed and accept that such prisoners feel secure in this workshop.
- 8.18 There is a Carpentry workshop and a Cement workshop in the Grove. There is also a Horticulture area. The work produced in these workshops is of high quality. The prisoners who work in the Carpentry workshop often receive their training in the main prison workshop prior to their transfer to the Grove. They produce, *inter alia*, garden sheds, dog kennels, children's playhouses and climbing frames. The Cement workshop produces, *inter alia*, patio slabs, garden ornaments and benches. The Horticulture area consists of a large greenhouse and a garden. A variety of fruit and vegetables including lettuce, tomatoes, rhubarb, onions, strawberries and grapes are produced. These produce are used in the kitchen in the Grove. Participation in these areas leads to accreditation through FETAC. At all times during my inspections the maximum number of prisoners permissible was working in these areas. Such workshops and training programmes are worthwhile as they give prisoners practical experience which should be of benefit to them on their release.

- 8.19 Castlereia Prison has an excellent waste management facility. Since it opened, the prison has reduced the amount of waste it generates substantially. A minimum of 8 prisoners work here 5 days a week. The prisoners are all chosen from the Grove. All prison waste is dealt with here, except medical waste which is prepared by the medical staff for collection by an outside contractor. All bins are collected daily from the prison and brought to this area. The bins are then emptied, thoroughly disinfected and washed. All biodegradable waste is converted to compost of a very high quality. This is then used in the horticulture area in the Grove.
- 8.20 All paper and cardboard is cleaned, compacted and baled. It is collected free of charge by a waste disposal company. Similarly all plastic and aluminium is cleaned, compacted and then collected free of charge by a waste disposal company. Certain electrical goods are partially broken-down for recycling.
- 8.21 Management hopes to introduce an accreditation course in waste management. I was impressed by the effectiveness and resourcefulness of this facility. It is certainly an initiative which could be developed in other prisons.
- 8.22 There is a gym in the main building which operates 7 days a week. Prisoners have access to the gym at least twice a week. The prisoners are supervised by fully qualified gym instructor officers. The gym contains a wide range of equipment. The showers in the gym were not working at the time of my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) and had not been working for over a year. I was informed that they are not going to be repaired as there are showers in the gym in the new unit, which will be used by all prisoners when it opens. The prisoners currently shower on the landings after using the gym. This, while unsatisfactory, is a short term measure.
- 8.23 There is also a small gym in the Grove. It is in an old rundown building. The window frames are wooden and are rotting. The gym was dirty on my initial inspection (29/30th July 2008) but after I had pointed this out to management it was clean on all subsequent inspections. There is an outdoor basket ball court for prisoners to use during recreation.

- 8.24 The laundry in Castlerea Prison caters for all the prisons' laundry. Up to 5 prisoners work here under the supervision of an Industrial Supervisor. This laundry is run efficiently. Every item is washed, dried and ironed. The system for the collection of laundry from prisoners and the returning of such laundry is efficient.
- 8.25 I was informed that management has made a submission that a new laundry is necessary to cater for the needs of the expected increased population when the new wing opens. I have been informed by the Irish Prison Service that, in the current economic climate, it is not possible to fund this project but it is anticipated the project will be included in the 2009/10 capital expenditure programme.
- 8.26 As the washing machines must be manually fed and some of the equipment is old the laundry cannot be recognised as a suitable accreditation centre. When the new laundry opens it should be certified to FETAC standards. In the interim, the Industrial Supervisor is certified by the Guild of Cleaners and Launderers and can train prisoners to the standards set by the Scottish Qualifications Authority SVQ in Laundry Operations level 2.
- 8.27 Two prisoners from the Grove maintain the grounds outside the prison walls. These grounds include the areas around the visitor's centre, the car parks, Castlerea Courthouse and the long entrance road from the public road to the prison. They also maintain the grounds of Harristown House and a local Churchyard adjacent to the prison. This entails considerable work done to a high standard for which the prisoners must be complimented.

Recommendations

- **Work in the Workshops should be rotated as appropriate. (para. 8.14)**
- **Ensure that sex offenders are able to engage in a range of vocational activities. (para. 8.17)**

- **Every effort should be made to have an accredited course in waste management introduced. (para. 8.21)**
- **The gym in the Grove should be refurbished. (para. 8.23)**
- **The prison laundry must be equipped to a standard to enable it deal with the proposed increase in prison population when the new unit opens. (para. 8.25)**
- **The laundry should be certified to FETAC standards. (para. 8.26)**

Extent of Prisoner Participation

8.30. Castlerea Prison has the potential to provide worthwhile education, work and training for the following numbers :- 50 prisoners in education (including P.E with a teacher), 10 working in the kitchen, 1 in the kitchen laundry, 8 in the Computer workshop, 8 in the Light Assembly workshop, 10 in the Fabric workshop, 8 in the Carpentry workshop, 18 cleaning the main prison building, 2 prisoners in the Reception, 2 prisoners in the stores, 5 prisoners in the laundry and 2 painting the main prison building. The following numbers can be engaged in activities in the Grove: - 12 prisoners in education, 5 maintaining the grounds, 8 prisoners in the waste management facility, 2 painting, 7 in the kitchen, 7 in the carpentry workshop, 5 in the cement workshop and 3 can work in the horticulture area. As not all of the activities detailed in this paragraph could be considered full-time prisoners should be able to engage in a number of different activities.

8.31. There is no compulsion on prisoners to attend education whilst in prison but prisoners can be required to undertake prison work. It is desirable that prisoners spend their time constructively whilst in prison.

8.32. The maximum number of prisoners that could be accommodated participated in the You're Equal programme. This programme operated in both Castlerea and Cork Prisons. 182 prisoners participated in the programme between both

prisons. As I have stated at paragraph 8.9 this programme was terminated at the end of 2008.

8.33. It appeared to me that certain prisoners were not dedicated in their commitment to the different services available. The introduction of a sentence management plan for every prisoner would provide stability in these prisoner's routines. As I have already said I will return to the issue of sentence management in later reports.

8.34. I have referred at paragraph 8.6 to the fact that the 'gathering' of prisoners for school means that the school does not always operate for the hours that it could.

Recommendations

- **All members of staff should continue to encourage prisoners to engage in the various activities available.**

Chapter 9

Security

- 9.1. Every morning random searches are carried out on each landing. Two prisoners and their cells are searched. Records are kept of illegal items or items which are banned by management which are found during these searches. The type of disciplinary action taken in the event of a prohibited item being found is also recorded.
- 9.2. In addition to the searches described at paragraph 9.1 all prisoners and their cells are subject to a general search once a month. Records are kept of all such searches.
- 9.3. Contraband including drugs, mobile telephones, sim cards, etc. has been discovered during such searches.
- 9.4. When a prisoner is on protection or following disciplinary proceedings that prisoner may be subject to screened visits where all contact with his visitor is prohibited. In the 3 months up to 1st August 2008, 30 such prisoners were the subject of screened visits.
- 9.5. In the 12 month period to 8th August 2008, no prisoner escaped from the prison or escaped whilst under escort to or from court or hospital and no prisoner absconded whilst being accompanied on temporary release but 12 prisoners failed to return when granted a specific period of temporary release. 10 of these prisoners were still at large as of the 8th August 2008.
- 9.6. A new pedestrian entrance for all persons, including staff, entering the prison has been built and was commissioned at the end of 2008. This has meant that enhanced security measures have been introduced with the installation of a turn stile pedestrian entrance, walk through metal detectors, x-ray scanners for handbags, briefcases, packages etc. Stop and search procedures have been

introduced. The drug detection dog unit established by the Irish Prison Service is available to management of Castlerea Prison and will operate in this area in addition to other areas as deployed. Additional waiting areas and holding rooms have also been provided.

9.7. The prison is well served by close circuit monitoring units. These have been upgraded and added to as necessary.

9.8. The use of the two holding rooms as referred to at paragraphs 5.10 and the recreation room in the Special Care Unit poses a considerable security risk to prisoners and staff.

Recommendations:

- **The two ‘holding rooms’ and the recreation room in the Special Care Unit should not be used to accommodate prisoners. (para. 9.8)**

Chapter 10

Discipline

- 10.1. In the 6 month period to 8th August 8th 2008, 3 prisoners were placed on disciplinary reports (P19s) following assaults on members of staff and 43 prisoners were placed on disciplinary reports following assaults on fellow prisoners.

- 10.2. In the three months to 8th August 2008, 54 prisoners were placed on disciplinary reports (P19's) for allegations other than assault. 3 prisoners forfeited remission, 5 prisoners forfeited evening recreation for 3 weeks or longer and 15 prisoners were restricted to screened visits. A considerable number of reports related to prisoners being in possession of an illegal substance or material banned by management. A further number of reports dealt with minor breaches of prison rules.

- 10.3. On two occasions I examined a significant random sample of disciplinary reports. As mentioned in paragraph 4.10 I found that the facts were recorded accurately and in detail. I am satisfied that the punishments imparted were both consistent and reasonable. There was no indication of particular officers placing prisoners on reports unreasonably.

Chapter 11

Summary of Recommendations

Chapter 4 The General Management of Castlereia Prison

- 1. Monthly multi-disciplinary meetings must be held. All meetings between heads of services must be minuted. (p.12)**
- 2. A dedicated system for recording assaults on prisoners must be introduced immediately. (p.14)**
- 3. Any remaining faults in the computer system must be rectified. (p.14)**

Chapter 5 The conditions and general health and welfare of prisoners in Castlereia Prison

- 4. Clean mattresses must be provided for all prisoners. (p. 24)**
- 5. The holding rooms and the recreation room in the Special Care Unit must not be used to accommodate numbers of prisoners at any one time. (p. 24)**
- 6. If prisoners are to be doubled up a risk assessment must be carried out. (p. 24)**
- 7. The facilities in the kitchen must be upgraded to deal with the increased population when the new unit opens. (p. 24)**
- 8. Adequate storage for tuck shop supplies must be provided to cater for the extra prisoner population when the new wing opens. (p. 24)**
- 9. Additional telephones must be provided for prisoners use. (p. 24)**
- 10. The audio system in the screened visiting booths must be upgraded as a matter of urgency. (p. 24)**
- 11. Ensure the medical unit has all necessary medical equipment. (p. 28)**
- 12. Ensure that prisoners receive the same level of health care in the prison as is available in the community. (p. 28)**

13. **Ensure that relevant resources, to include appropriate health care professionals, are available to prisoners to give effect to the foregoing recommendation. (p.28)**
14. **Prisoners should be seen by a probation officer on committal. (p. 31)**
15. **When the new unit opens all necessary facilities should be provided for Addiction Counsellors including appropriate interview rooms, access to computer, telephones etc. (p. 31)**

Chapter 6 The general conduct and effectiveness of persons who work in Castlerea Prison

16. **Management must ensure that all complaints continue to be investigated impartially and relevant records kept of such investigations. (p. 32)**
17. **The Irish Prison Service must fill all vacant posts without delay. (p. 33)**
18. **Records should be kept detailing the 15 minute inspections in the Special Care Unit. (p.33)**
19. **Training for staff at all levels should be ongoing. (p. 33)**
20. **Management must satisfy itself that adequate staff numbers are deployed at all times. (p.33)**

Chapter 7 Compliance with national and international standards, including in particular the prison rules

21. **Castlerea Prison must comply with national and international standards relating to the treatment of prisoners and the maintenance of proper conditions in the prison. (p.35)**

Chapter 8 Programmes and other facilities available for prisoners and the extent to which prisoners participate in them

22. **Management must ensure that prisoners rostered to attend school are brought to the school on time. (p. 38)**
23. **Work in the Workshops should be rotated as appropriate. (p. 42)**

24. **Ensure that sex offenders are able to engage in a range of vocational activities. (p. 42)**
25. **Every effort should be made to have an accredited course in waste management introduced. (p. 43)**
26. **The gym in the Grove should be refurbished. (p. 43)**
27. **The prison laundry must be equipped to a standard to enable it deal with the proposed increase in prison population when the new unit opens. (p. 43)**
28. **The laundry should be certified to FETAC standards. (p. 43)**
29. **All members of staff should continue to encourage prisoners to engage in the various activities available. (p.44)**

Chapter 9 Security

30. **The two 'holding rooms' and the recreation room in the Special Care Unit should not be used to accommodate prisoners. (p. 46)**