

Cork Prison Visiting Committee Annual Report 2009

Monthly meetings were held and committee members visited various departments by arrangement and unannounced.

Prisoner's requests to meet committee members were dealt with regularly
And without delay

Prisoner requests were:

1. Transfer to other prisons
2. Medication and medical requests
3. Difficulties with other fellow prisoners

Prisoners requests and complaints were brought to the governor for discussion
And intervention where necessary.

Education, Training and pre release

These programmes are working well but the maximum benefit to prisoners is not being realised because of the frequent transfer of prisoners to other prisons due to the overcrowding.

Music classes by music teacher Noel Shine are well attended and very popular with prisoners.

These music classes were made into a radio documentary which was broadcast on Rte radio 1.

Cell Accommodation

Slopping out and lack of in cell sanitation makes living conditions very poor and is made worse by the overcrowding problem.

Visit to Arbour Hill Prison

Committee visited Arbour Hill Prison and viewed the facilities there.

Screening System

The screening system for all people entering the prison and the use of a sniffer dog for drug detection is in operation.

An independent evaluation of this system needs to be carried out to test its efficiency.

Mental Health Services

The provision of mental health services is inadequate and the arrangements for prisoners while awaiting treatment at the Central Mental Hospital needs to be reviewed.

The reduction of psychology and counselling services is a serious matter and should urgently be reviewed.

Internal Audit

In December 2009 an internal audit of prison activities took place and a report is being finalised.

Visiting Committee Guidelines

The publication of these guidelines has been of considerable help to members and particularly new members,

Swine flu protocol

Swine flu protocol is in place at the prison.

Water Shortage

Due to flooding in Cork there was a water shortage at the prison, the contingency plan in place worked well.

New Prison

The committee hoped to see developments of a new prison in north cork.

Thanks

The committee wish to express appreciation to the governor Mr Jim Collins and staff at the prison for their cooperation and courtesy to the committee. The committee wish to thank the voluntary organisations that assist the prisoners and the prison services; Cork Simon Community, St Vincent De Paul, Legion of Mary, Alcoholics Anonymous and other caring and interested groups.

Mr tim O' Leary who acted as secretary to the committee retired, the committee wish to thank him for his work, and wish him well in his retirement.

4/2/2010

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Please find enclosed Annual Report for 2009 in respect of Cork Visiting Committee.

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