Mr. Alan Shatter T.D.,
Minister for Justice, Equality & Defence,
74 St Stephens Green,
Dublin 2.

Visiting Committee Annual Report 2013

We, the members of the Visiting Committee at Portlaoise Prison are pleased to present our Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 2013.

The Committee met on the first Tuesday of each month throughout the year and two members of the Committee visit the Prison on an unannounced visit once a month. Each month members of the Committee visit different areas of the Prison and inspect all the facilities and services which are available to the prisoners.

The Committee met with a large number of prisoners throughout the year who had various requests and issues which they wished to raise with the Visiting Committee. The Committee brought these issues and requests to the attention of the Governor along with their recommendations and were satisfied with the decision or action taken on each occasion.

Throughout the year, the Committee visited the C Block, on many occasions and are delighted to report that this new Block is a very modern building with in cell sanitation which provides a wide range of workshops and education facilities for offenders housed in this Block.
The committee is happy to report that some new Work Training Officers have been assigned to Portlaoise Prison with a view to opening more workshops and offering training for prisoners.

We are happy to report that all prisoners have access to a very good health care system which includes a full time Medical Officer, who along with the Nurse Officers and Medical Orderlies provide excellent care for all the prisoners. A Physiotherapist from the local hospital visits the Prison on a weekly basis and a visiting Psychologist also attends at the Prison on a regular basis. The following clinics are also provided on a regular basis or as required i.e. Psychiatrist, Dentist, Chiropodist and Optician.

The Catholic chaplain, Fr Drumm and the Church of Ireland Minister continue to care for the spiritual needs of the prisoners.

The Prison also has a full time Probation Officer who addresses a wide range of issues with the prisoners such as offending behaviour, anger management, addiction, coping skills, problem solving skills and resettlement issues. Most of the work is carried out on

an individual basis but some group work programmes also took place during the year. Some prisoners also requested help with sourcing accommodation, social welfare and employment in preparation for their release throughout the year.

The Education Centre offers prisoners a wide range of subjects at basic, intermediate and advanced levels. The Education Centre held a number of examinations by accredited bodies during the year and a number of prisoners sat these exams. A number of pre release courses were also offered during the year and include courses in Goal Setting, Personal Development, Relationships and Job preparation.

Visiting speakers from the following agencies also visited and gave great assistance and were very informative and beneficial to the Pre Release Programme.

- Citizens Information Centre
- Linkage (Employment issues)
- FAS
- Pathways
- Pace
- Addiction Centre

The following courses were also completed to aid prisoners with their needs and requirements for employment on release from Prison.

- Environmental Food Hygiene (Leonardo)
- City & Guilds, Skills Foundation, Skills Proficiency
- Pre Release Programme
- European Computer Driving License (ECDL)
- Web Design
- First Aid / CPR/ Order of Malta
- Addiction Studies

The Education Centre had an average enrolment of between 250 and 260 prisoners throughout the year. The Centre has a teaching staff of 9 full time teachers and 20 part time teachers. The education programme runs from 9.15 am until 7.30 pm for 206 days per annum.

The Education Centre holds examinations accredited by the following bodies :

Junior Certificate
Leaving Certificate
FETAC Level 3
FETAC Level 4
FETAC Level 5
Open University/Distance Learning
Trinity Guildhall
Scrudu Ceol Tire Comhaltas

Royal Irish Academy of Music
Rockschool

The Education Programme, projects and extra curricular activities is continuously evolving and developing and a large number of extra educational projects and activities were developed and encouraged by teachers in the Prison during the year including Poetry & Creative Writing workshops, Music & Song Writing, Motivational Workshop, Craft Workshop, First Aid and Philosophy Workshop.

Industrial Supervisor in charge of the Kitchen and his team of several Assistant Industrial Supervisors continue to produce and maintain very high standards in preparing, cooking and distribution of food on a daily basis. The 28 day menu caters for both normal and vegetarian diet.
Prisoners working in this area must take part in a number of certifiable training courses which assists them in the performance of their work and helps them maintain an interest in their work.
Once again, we congratulate the Governor and his staff in this area on their many achievements during the year.

In conclusion, we would like to thank Governors Mullen, Moran and Gavin, their management team and staff for the courtesy, assistance and hospitality provided to us on our visits to the Prison at all times during the year.

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Michael Hough
Chairman

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Brian O Neill

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Margaret Guijt Lawlor

An tUasal Alan Shatter TD,
An tAire Dlí agus Cirt, Comhionannais agus Cosanta,
94 Faiche Stiabhna,
Baile Átha Cliath 2.

Tuarascáil Bhliantúil an Choiste Cuairte 2013

Táimidne, baill an Choiste Cuairte ag Príosún Phort Laoise, sásta ár dTuarascáil Bhliantúil le haghaidh na bliana dar críoch an 31 Nollaig 2013 a chur i láthair.

Tháinig an Coiste le chéile ar an gcéad Mhairt de gach mí ar le linn na bliana agus tugann beirt bhall den Choiste cuairt gan fógra ar an bPríosún uair amháin sa mhí. Tugann baill den Choiste cuairt ar chodanna éagsúla den Phríosún gach mí agus déanann siad cigireacht ar na háiseanna agus ar na seirbhísí uile atá ar fáil do na príosúnaigh.

Le linn na bliana, bhuail an Coiste le líon mór príosúnach ag a raibh iarratais agus ceisteanna éagsúla a bhí siad ag iarraidh a chur in iúl don Choiste Cuairte. Thug an Coiste na ceisteanna agus na hiarratais sin, mar aon le moltaí na bpríosúnach ina leith, ar aird don Ghobharnóir agus bhí siad sásta leis an gcinneadh nó leis an mbeart a rinneadh gach uair.

Le linn na bliana, thug an Coiste cuairt ar Bhloc C roinnt mhaith uaireanta. Tá lúcháir orainn a rá gur foirgneamh thar a bheith nua-aimseartha atá sa Bhloc nua sin, áit a bhfuil sláintíocht inchillín agus a soláthraítear raon leathan ceardlann agus áiseanna oideachais do chiontóirí atá lonnaithe sa Bhloc.
Tá an coiste sásta a thuairisciú gur sannadh Oifigigh Oiliúna Oibre nua do Phríosún Phort Laoise d’fhonn tuilleadh ceardlann a oscailt agus tuilleadh oiliúna a chur ar fáil do phríosúnaigh.

Táimid sásta a rá go mbíonn rochtain ag na príosúnaigh go léir ar chóras cúram sláinte ar chaighdeán an-mhaith. Cuireann Oifigeach Míochaine an chórais sin cúram sármhaith ar fáil do na príosúnaigh go léir in éineacht leis na hOifigigh Altra agus na Giollaí Míochaine. Tugann Fisiteiripeoir ón ospidéal áitiúil cuairt ar an bPríosún ar bhonn seachtainiúil agus freastalaíonn Síceolaí cuairte ar an bPríosún ar bhonn rialta. Ina theannta sin, cuirtear na clinicí seo a leanas ar fáil ar bhonn rialta nó de réir mar is gá: Síciatraí, Fiaclóir, Coslia agus Radharceolaí.

Leanann an séiplíneach Caitliceach, an tAthair Drumm, agus an Ministir ó Eaglais na hÉireann le haire a thabhairt do riachtanais eaglasta na bpríosúnach.

Tá Oifigeach Promhaidh lánaimseartha ag an bPríosún chomh maith, duine a thugann aghaidh ar raon leathan ceisteanna leis na príosúnaigh amhail iompraíocht ionsaitheach, láimhseáil feirge, andúil, scileanna láimhseála, scileanna réitigh fadhbanna agus ceisteanna athlonnaithe. Is ar bhonn aonair a dhéantar an chuid is mó den obair ach cuireadh roinnt clár um obair ghrúpa i gcrích le linn na bliana chomh maith. D'iarr roinnt príosúnach cuidiú maidir le cóiríocht, le leas sóisialta agus le fostaíocht a fháil agus iad ag ullmhú dá scaoileadh amach le linn na bliana.

Is san Ionad Oideachais a chuirtear raon leathan ábhar ar fáil do na Príosúnaigh ag an mbunleibhéal, ag an meánleibhéal agus ag an ardleibhéal. Tionóladh roinnt scrúduithe éagsúla de chuid comhlachtaí creidiúnaithe san Ionad Oideachas le linn na bliana agus thug cuid de na príosúnaigh faoi na scrúduithe sin. Soláthraíodh roinnt cúrsaí réamhscaoilte le linn na bliana chomh maith, lenar áiríodh cúrsaí maidir le Spriocanna a Leagan Síos, Forbairt Phearsanta, Caidreamh agus ullmhú don fhostaíocht.

Thug cainteoirí cuairte ó na gníomhaireachtaí seo a leanas cuairt ar an bpríosún freisin agus thug siad an-chuidiú agus bhí siad an-fhaisnéiseach agus tairbhiúil don Chlár Réamhscaoilte Amach.

- An tIonad Eolais do Shaoránaigh
- Linkage (Ceisteanna fostaíochta)
- FÁS
- Pathways
- Pace
- Ionad Andúile

Cuireadh na cúrsaí seo a leanas i gcrích chomh maith agus ba é ab aidhm dóibh cabhrú le príosúnaigh maidir lena riachtanais fostaíochta i ndiaidh a scaoilte amach:

- Sláinteachas Bia Comhshaoil (Leonardo)
- City & Guilds, Bunscileanna, Oilteacht Scileanna
- Clár Réamhscaoilte Amach
- Ceadúnas Eorpach Tiomána Ríomhairí (ECDL)
- Dearadh Gréasáin
- Garchabhair / CPR/ Ord Mhálta
- Staidéar Andúile

Bhí meánlíon de 250 agus 260 príosúnach cláraithe leis an Ionad Oideachais le linn na bliana. Tá 9 múinteoir lánaimseartha agus 20 múinteoir pháirtaimseartha ar fhoireann an Ionaid. Bíonn an clár oideachais ar siúl idir 9.15 am go 7.30 pm ar feadh 206 lá in aghaidh na bliana.

Is iad scrúduithe atá creidiúnaithe ag na comhlachtaí seo a leanas a thionóltar san Ionad Oideachais:

An Teastas Sóisearach
An Ardteistiméireacht
Leibhéal 3 FETAC
Leibhéal 4 FETAC
Leibhéal 5 FETAC
An Ollscoil Oscailte/Cianfhoghlaim
Guildhall na Tríonóide
Scrúdú Ceol Tíre Comhaltas
Ceol-Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Rockschool

Bíonn an Clár Oideachais, tionscadail agus gníomhaíochtaí seach-churaclaim ag athrú agus ag forbairt i gcónaí agus rinne na múinteoirí sa Phríosún roinnt mhór tionscadal agus gníomhaíochtaí oideachais breise a fhorbairt agus a spreagadh le linn na bliana sna réimsí seo a leanas: Filíocht agus Scríbhneoireacht Chruthaitheach, Ceol agus Scríbhneoireacht Amhrán, Ceardlann Inspreagtha, Ceardlann Ceardaíochta, Garchabhair agus Ceardlann Fealsúnachta.

Leanann an Maoirseoir Tionscail atá i gceannas ar an gCistin agus a fhoireann atá comhdhéanta de roinnt Maoirseoirí Tionscail Cúnta le caighdeáin an-ard a tháirgeadh agus a choinneáil maidir le bia a ullmhú, a chócaráil agus a leithdháileadh ar bhonn laethúil. Freastalaíonn an biachlár 28 lá do ghnáthaiste bia agus d'aiste bia veigeatórach araon.
Ní mór do phríosúnaigh a oibríonn sa réimse sin páirt a ghlacadh i roinnt cúrsaí oiliúna indeimhnithe a chabhraítear leo a gcuid oibre a dhéanamh agus spéis a choinneáil san obair sin.
Ba mhaith linn comhghairdeas a ghabháil arís eile leis an nGobharnóir agus lena fhoireann sa réimse sin mar gheall ar an iomad éachtaí a bhain siad amach le linn na bliana.

Ar deireadh, ba mhaith linn buíochas a ghabháil leis an nGobharnóir Mullen, leis an nGobharnóir Moran agus leis an nGobharnóir Gavin, lena fhoireann bhainistíochta agus leis an bhfoireann as an gcúirtéis, cúnamh agus fáilte a fuaireamar le linn ár gcuairteanna ar an bPríosún gach uair le linn na bliana.

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Michael Hough
Cathaoirleach

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Brian O Neill

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Margaret Guijt Lawlor