

Report on an Inspection of Limerick Prison  
by the Inspector of Prisons  
Judge Michael Reilly

25<sup>th</sup> November 2011

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Inspector of Prisons Judge Michael Reilly**

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

Judge Michael Reilly  
Inspector of Prisons

25<sup>th</sup> November 2011

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## Acknowledgments

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I would like, in particular, to thank all the persons that spoke to me and my team including prison staff, prisoners, those that provide services to prisoners and visitors to the prison for their forthright and candid views. I would also like to thank those who are not mentioned in this short acknowledgment and who in one way or another assisted me in my inspection.

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 Ms. Linda Larkin (Office Manager), Ms. Michelle Slattery and Mr. John Byrne. They are a dedicated, interested and cohesive team who worked long hours and for that I thank them.

Judge Michael Reilly  
Inspector of Prisons

25<sup>th</sup> November 2011

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

1.1 In paragraphs 2.32 and 2.33 of my Annual Report 2010, I stated:

*“I am particularly concerned about Limerick Prison. There are many deficiencies in the prison some, if not all, of which should have been obvious to management.*

*I will keep the situation in Limerick Prison under constant review and will report on same as appropriate. I will expect that management will have due regard to my observations in Chapter 4 of this Report.”*

1.2 I am still particularly concerned about Limerick Prison.

1.3 This Report covers a period of approximately 9 months. During this time I visited the prison on numerous occasions. These visits were both announced and unannounced and took place during the day, at night and at the weekend.

1.4 In normal course I would be happy that, whatever deficiencies I had encountered during an inspection, would either have been dealt with prior to the presentation of my Report to the Minister for Justice and Equality (hereinafter referred to as the Minister) or, if still outstanding, could be dealt with in a short period of time thereafter. In those situations it would not be necessary to carry out a follow up inspection to confirm that my recommendations had been complied with. This is not the position as far as Limerick Prison is concerned. There are numerous matters that require attention. Certain new procedures must be put in place. Regime changes must occur. These are all necessary in order that Limerick Prison could be said to be operating to acceptable standards and to best international practice where prisoners’ rights are vindicated, where safe and secure custody is the norm and where staff can work in a safe environment.

- 1.5 In Chapter 2, I give a comprehensive overview of Limerick Prison. I have divided the chapter into sections in order that the reader has an accurate view of the prison, the conditions in the prison and the services provided.
- 1.6 In Chapter 3, I detail the present overcrowding of the prison.
- 1.7 In Chapter 4, I outline issues that should have been addressed in the prison prior to the date of this Report.
- 1.8 In Chapter 5, I set out the facilities available to prison staff in Limerick Prison.
- 1.9 In Chapter 6, I set out my concerns relating to different aspects of the prison. These concerns are informed by the physical conditions of the prison as observed by me, by my observations of those working in the prison, by my observations of prisoners, by my conversations with a wide section of people including, *inter alia*, prison management, prison officers, prisoners, prison visitors, interested persons, the many people and organisations that provide services to prisoners both in the prison and outside and my observations generally. The concerns referred to in Chapter 6 are major concerns. There are of course a wide variety of other issues that should be addressed. If I were to include all of these in the body of this Report it could negative the absolute necessity of addressing the major issues. I will be happy to work with the Irish Prison Service and local management to endeavour to address all issues.
- 1.10 On 18<sup>th</sup> November 2011, I had a meeting (hereinafter referred to as the “November Meeting”) with the Secretary General, Department of Justice and Equality, the Director of Operations, Irish Prison Service, the Director of Corporate Services, Irish Prison Service and the Governor of Limerick Prison. A constructive and wide ranging discussion covering the main points raised in this Report took place. It was agreed that certain issues would be addressed. In certain instances timeframes were agreed which are included in **Appendix A** of this Report. Where relevant, I have referred to the November Meeting in the body of this Report.

- 1.11 I am conscious that parts of Limerick Prison are old and that this brings its own problems. It is a commonly held view that Limerick Prison is an old prison with all the negative aspects that attach to a prison that was constructed in 1821. This belief is far from the truth as only A and B Divisions, which only accommodate 55 cells, remain from that time. The remainder of the prison comprising, *inter alia*, 157 cells, a new school, a medical centre, facilities for all service providers, a new gym and recreational hall is either of recent vintage or in an area that has been refurbished to a high standard. Therefore, any suggestion that, because of its age, nothing can be done with Limerick Prison to ensure that it complies with best standards is untrue. I am also conscious of the present constraints on the public finances. I must point out, that, none of these reasons can be taken as an excuse for denying prisoners their basic human rights.
- 1.12 I am satisfied that, despite the efforts of management and staff, Limerick Prison cannot, at present, be said to comply with best international practice. Certain areas of the prison are not fit for purpose. It is questionable as to whether the prison provides a safe environment for staff to work in.
- 1.13 This Report while highlighting many negatives in Limerick Prison should not be taken as total condemnation of the prison. If the concerns outlined in Chapter 6 are addressed Limerick Prison can continue to play an important role in the Irish prison system.
- 1.14 Having set out in this Report the actions that must be taken I intend revisiting Limerick Prison for the purpose of confirming that the works and changes that I have outlined in this Report have either been completed or are ongoing. If these works and changes are ongoing I will expect to be kept apprised of the work being carried out and the timeframe for completion of such works. My visits will be ongoing and mostly unannounced. I intend submitting four short reports to the Minister as set out in Appendix A. I intend submitting a further, more comprehensive, report to the Minister on Limerick Prison within 12 months of the date of this Report. This further report will, not only, deal with issues raised in this Report and all matters that I am obliged to take account of

as set out in Section 32 of the Prisons Act 2007 but will also address all other issues relevant to the standards that I expect to encounter in prisons.

- 1.15 This Report, while specific to Limerick Prison, addresses issues common to many prisons. My comments on issues of concern in Limerick Prison might also be relevant to similar issues in other prisons. Therefore, the management of all prisons should be cognisant of my views and should not await my arrival before attending to such issues, if relevant, in their prisons.



## Chapter 2

### **Overview of Limerick Prison**

- 2.1 Limerick Prison consists of a male and a female prison. The prison is both a remand and committal prison. Both remand and committal prisoners are accommodated together.

#### **Accommodation in male prison**

- 2.2 The male prison comprises 4 Divisions, 2 of which - A Division and B Division, date from 1821 when the prison was built. C Division and D Division were constructed in 2003 and 1998 respectively.
- 2.3 There are 28 cells in A Division, 27 cells in B Division, 78 cells in C Division and 52 cells in D Division.
- 2.4 The cells in A and B Divisions do not have in-cell sanitation. The cells in C and D Divisions have screened in-cell sanitation.
- 2.5 In my report titled "*An examination of duties and obligations owed to prisoners*" dated 29<sup>th</sup> July 2010 (hereinafter referred to in this Report as the "Duties and Obligations Report") I set out in paragraph 2.3 the criteria to be adopted for cell occupancy. I stated that for single occupancy cells should be a minimum of 7m<sup>2</sup> and have in-cell sanitation which should preferably be screened. I further stated that for each additional prisoner an additional 4m<sup>2</sup> would meet best international practice. Where prisoners share cells the toilet facilities should in all cases be screened.
- 2.6 In Chapter 11 of my Duties and Obligations Report I set out in detail the measurements of all cells in Limerick Prison. The numbers of cells and the measurement of same have not changed between the date of such report and the date of the presentation of this Report.
- 2.7 Adopting the criteria set out in paragraph 2.5:

- the 28 cells on A Division and the 27 cells on B Division could be used for single occupancy only if in-cell sanitation is installed,
- the 78 cells on C Division and the 52 cells on D Division should only be used for single occupancy.

2.8 Therefore, there are 185 cells in the Male Prison. These only meet the criteria for single occupancy.

2.9 There is one Safety Observation Cell and one Close Supervision Cell in D1. The Safety Observation Cell does not have the characteristics of the old padded cells. The interior is of a Velstone finish which is hard wearing and durable. My advice was sought by the Irish Prison Service as to whether cells with this finish could be classed as Safety Observation Cells. Having considered the matter and having taken advice I considered that they could. I gave this advice in the following terms:-

*“Many jurisdictions have abandoned the use of padded cells principally on the basis that it is direct human contact that is most effective when managing someone thought to be at risk of self harm. I understand that padded cells have long been abandoned in many psychiatric settings. Having padded cells also risks giving a false reassurance that because the person is in such a cell that they are always safe which of course they are not.*

*For people who have suicidal tendencies or are at risk of self harm it is more important to have permanent direct observation of the person (not just via CCTV). This permanent observation is really the key not the construction or internal finish of the cell”.*

There are inadequate records relating to the detention of prisoners in these Safety Observation and Close Supervision Cells covering the period under review. At the November Meeting it was agreed that a new system of recording would be maintained as and from 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Detailed

instructions for the use of such cells and for the maintenance of such records will be contained in two Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which will be issued to all prisons prior to that date. I was also informed that appropriate signage to designate the use of such cells would be in use as and from 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

- 2.10 There are 4 other cells in D1. These, while counted in the numbers available for accommodating prisoners as set out in paragraph 2.8 really seem to alternate between Close Supervision Cells and cells for the accommodation of prisoners with very specific needs.
- 2.11 On all of my visits to Limerick Prison, subject to paragraph 2.14, I have found most areas of A and B Divisions dirty, unhygienic, with broken equipment and severely overcrowded. I deal with the issue of overcrowding in Chapter 3. At the November Meeting it was agreed that all areas on A and B Divisions would be clean and all equipment in the wash/slop out areas would be repaired by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011.
- 2.12 Windows in all cells on both A and B Divisions were broken on all of my visits. I have been informed by management that prisoners break these windows during the summer to let in air. No effort had been made up to my visit on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 to repair these windows. This is unacceptable. Not alone can these cells be cold in winter but rain comes in through the broken windows. I have witnessed damp bed clothes in a number of cells which is a direct result of the broken windows. In winter time I have noted that prisoners endeavour to block the holes in windows by using towels, toilet rolls and other materials. There is poor ventilation in all cells in both Divisions. Hot water pipes run through the cells which increases the heat in hot weather. The quality of the air in all cells appears totally inadequate. This is exacerbated by the smell of sewage which permeates most cells and is further contributed to by overcrowding and in the case of cells in B Division by the accommodation of Protection Prisoners who are effectively locked down for prolonged periods with some for up to 23 hours per day. I was informed at the November Meeting that temporary measures will be taken to

address the broken window problem. No specific date could be given for the completion of this work.

- 2.13 The majority of cells on the A and B Divisions were dirty and required painting and refurbishment. In many cases they did not have adequate furniture and most serious of all I noted on all my visits that in a number of cells prisoners sharing cells did not have individual slop out pots. On 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011, 25% of cells in A Division did not have individual slop out pots for prisoners sharing cells. In all these cases such prisoners had to share slop out pots.
- 2.14 The landings on A and B Divisions, while initially dirty and in need of painting, were clean and painted on my later visits.
- 2.15 I enquired of management on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 as to the procedure for the painting of the cells on A and B Divisions. I was informed that if prisoners wished to have them painted they would be supplied with paint. The prison is not proactive in this regard.
- 2.16 The majority of the cells on A and B Divisions require refurbishment. In addition to broken windows (paragraph 2.12) there are holes in walls, damaged ceilings, damaged floors and electric wiring needing attention.
- 2.17 Cells on A and B Divisions are cleaned by the occupying prisoners. This is the situation in all prisons. A high percentage of cells on the two Divisions were dirty. I queried as to who should be responsible for ensuring that the cells were clean. I was informed by prison management that it is the responsibility of the prisoner under the supervision of the class officer in each case throughout the prison. This may well be the case but it does not absolve their superiors of ultimate responsibility.
- 2.18 The prisoners on A and B Divisions must slop out in the area where they wash, shower and get drinking water. Most of these areas were dirty on all of my visits to the prison. In certain areas electric hand driers were either not

working or non-existent. Sacks of rubbish were left in these areas and noted by me on a number of occasions and as recently as 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The smell of sewage was unacceptable on all my visits but was worst on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011 (my most recent visit). Prisoners are obliged to wash their eating utensils in these unhygienic areas. They do not have separate dedicated sinks for this purpose. The smell is not confined to the slop out/wash areas. It permeates entire divisions and most cells. It should be noted that prisoners have to eat all their meals in their cells. While not qualified to give a definitive opinion it is my view that this raises health and safety issues.

At the November Meeting the Governor undertook that as and from 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011 a “toilet patrol” would be provided on A and B Divisions during periods of lockup. This will mean that as and from that date prisoners will be released, on demand, to attend to their toilet needs during all periods of lockup. This should ensure that “slopping out” becomes a thing of the past. I will closely monitor this situation.

- 2.19 A and B Divisions are not, in their present state, fit for purpose. The continued incarceration of prisoners in these divisions is inhuman and degrading.
- 2.20 At the November Meeting the Secretary General, Department of Justice and Equality confirmed that the Transformation Team of the Irish Prison Service would, as a matter of priority, undertake a review of Limerick Prison. The task of the Transformation Team is to look at all aspects of prison life, to identify regimes and services that should be in prisons, to ensure that best use is made of staff resources, to identify staff shortages and to identify areas which require improvement, refurbishment or replacement in order that the prison can comply with best operating practice. This review will commence in January 2012. It will, *inter alia*, look at the options for A and B Divisions. It will then be for the Irish Prison Service and local management to produce plans with realistic timeframes to implement the action plan proposed by the Transformation Team. In the event that the Transformation Team has not

finalised its review by 16<sup>th</sup> March 2012, I will expect to be provided with an interim report in order that I can report on progress to the Minister.

- 2.21 All landings on C and D Divisions were clean on my inspections. Most of the cells in these areas were also clean.
- 2.22 A number of windows in D Division were broken and had been broken for some considerable time. These and other repairs should be carried out as and when required.
- 2.23 Continuous painting will be required to ensure that C and D Divisions do not fall into dilapidated condition. Prison management must be proactive in ensuring that cells are kept to a proper standard. It should not be left to prisoners to decide when cells should be painted.
- 2.24 The 4 cells in D1, referred to in paragraph 2.10 were dirty on all of my visits to the prison. One prisoner 'lives' in this area and has done so for approximately two years. He has practically no exercise and is incapable, because of his problems, of associating with any other prisoners. From his condition, the condition of his cell and from my conversations with people in the prison it is obvious that this prisoner should be in another type of institution where his particular needs can be catered for. At the November Meeting the Secretary General stated that a review of this prisoner's conditions of detention would be examined.
- 2.25 The Safety Observation Cell and the Close Supervision Cell in D1 referred to in paragraph 2.9 were at times cold, dirty and had broken equipment such as broken water supply and non flushing toilet. The flushing mechanism of the toilet in the Safety Observation Cell was not working on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 despite the fact that I had brought this particular problem to the attention of prison management on a number of prior visits. It was agreed by the Governor at the November Meeting that this problem would be attended to immediately.

2.26 There are an adequate numbers of showers on C and D Divisions. These areas were clean on my visits.

### **Accommodation in female prison**

2.27 Initially the female prison had 10 accommodation cells and one Safety Observation Cell in a renovated block. Each cell measures 8.86m<sup>2</sup> and has in-cell sanitation. These cells were constructed as single occupancy cells and as such comply with best practice. All of these cells are now being used for double occupancy.

2.28 The toilets, while screened from the door, are not otherwise screened. The toilets are not covered. I have observed food trays and towels being used as toilet covers. When there is more than one prisoner in a cell a prisoner attending to her sanitary or washing requirements does so within feet of and in full view of her fellow prisoner. The situation is far worse when there are three prisoners in the cell.

2.29 On occasions I have observed broken windows in a number of cells.

2.30 In November 2010, 14 refurbished cells measuring 9.09m<sup>2</sup> with in-cell sanitation were opened. These cells have been refurbished to a high standard and are used for single occupancy.

2.31 Therefore, there are 24 cells in the female prison which meet the criteria for single occupancy and no more.

2.32 There is one Safety Observation Cell in the female prison. This measures 8.44m<sup>2</sup>. It is of the same construction as the Safety Observation Cell in D1 as referred to in paragraph 2.9. There are inadequate records relating to the detention of prisoners in this cell covering the period of this review. At the November Meeting it was agreed that a new system of recording would be maintained as and from 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Detailed instructions for the use of such cell and for the maintenance of such records will be contained in one Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which will be issued to Limerick Prison

prior to that date. I was also informed that appropriate signage to designate the use of such cells would be in use as and from 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

- 2.33 All areas of the female prison were clean on all of my inspections.
- 2.34 There are an adequate number of showers in the female prison. The water in the original showers has been cold on most of my visits. I was informed that this had been reported on many occasions.

### **Recreational facilities for male prisoners**

- 2.35 There are 4 yards for exercise for male prisoners. On most of my visits these yards were dirty. The covered shelters were dirty as were the urinals. All prisoners should have access to these yards each day. It was agreed at the November Meeting that all areas would be clean as of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011.
- 2.36 Prisoners on A and B Divisions have **NO** indoor recreational areas. The Transformation Team are due to address this issue.
- 2.37 There are indoor recreational facilities in C and D Divisions. The recreation hall in C Division has a table tennis table, a television and a number of small tables for cards or other games. This hall is bright and fit for purpose. The toilets for this area were clean on my inspections. The recreation hall in D Division has a television, 2 tables and a number of chairs. This area while large enough as a recreational area also doubles as a hallway to the D Yard and to all landings of D Division. This imposes its own restrictions on the use of such area for its designated purpose. The toilets in this area were filthy on many of my inspections and probably worst on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011 (date of my last inspection). It was agreed at the November Meeting that all areas would be clean by 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011.
- 2.38 There is a new and very well equipped gym and recreation hall in the main prison, which were clean on all my inspections.



- 2.39 The time spent in the yards and in the recreational areas differs depending on whether prisoners are on protection or not. Prisoners on protection are entitled to a minimum of one hour's exercise each day. This poses a difficulty for management as prisoners may be offered their hour's exercise first thing in the morning when invariably they do not take up the offer. Weather conditions may also dictate that certain prisoners do not get to the yards. The presence of gangs in Limerick Prison and the difficulties associated with keeping these gangs apart also means that prisoners from such gangs may get limited access to the yards. The Transformation Team will address this issue.
- 2.40 During the period under review the number of prisoners on protection ranged from 66 to 77. On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011 there were 72 protection prisoners in Limerick Prison. Of these 26 were on 23 hour lock up. All others were on restricted regimes. All 53 prisoners accommodated on B Division were on protection, 5 protection prisoners were on D1 with the remaining 14 on D4. The Transformation Team will address this issue.

#### **Recreational facilities for female prisoners**

- 2.41 The female prisoners have a small yard. It does not have any shelter or seating. All female prisoners have access to this yard, but such access is restricted because of, *inter alia*, weather conditions. However, as there is no other structured activity readily available for female prisoners they find themselves in a position of having to go to the yard, often in inclement weather, to get minimal exercise.
- 2.42 There is a small gym in the female prison. It has limited opening hours.
- 2.43 There is a small indoor recreation area in the female prison. It has limited opening hours.
- 2.44 The yard, gym and recreation room were clean on all my visits.
- 2.45 The female prisoners have limited access to the main gym and recreational hall in the main prison.

2.46 All female prisoners have access to the yard, gym and recreational room in their area as none are on protection as of the date of this Report. In April 2011 there were 3 female prisoners on protection which created its own problems.

### **Workshops**

2.47 Apart from the woodwork shop which is run in conjunction with the school there are **NO** workshops operating in Limerick Prison. The woodwork shop, if open, could accommodate 12 prisoners who could receive accreditation but in the words of management, it is “more often closed than open”.

2.48 A number of prisoners attend industrial cleaning courses and engage in specialised cleaning in the prison. Other prisoners are engaged in varying relevant activities in the prison some of which lead to accreditation. The following table gives details of these activities, accreditation if any and the numbers of prisoners so engaged. The information in Table 1 was supplied by prison management on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011.

**Table 1**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accreditation</b>	<b>Number Attending</b>
Industrial Cleaning	Yes	6
Kitchen	Yes	14
Laundry	Yes	10
Reception – General Cleaning Duties	No	2
Grounds – General Cleaning Duties	No	2
General Office – General Cleaning	No	1

Cleaners – 2 per landing (17)	No	34
Gym – General Cleaning	No	2
School – General Cleaning	No	1
Painting parties	No	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>82</b>

It can be seen from the above Table that a total of 82 prisoners can be occupied in the prison on a daily basis - of whom only 42 could gain accreditation presupposing the woodwork shop were operating full time. If the woodwork shop (referred to at paragraph 2.47) were open a further 12 could be occupied. The main gym is open 5 days per week for 13 sessions with each Division allocated a specific time or times. These range from 1 session per week for female prisoners to 3 sessions per week for each of the other Divisions. It is difficult to estimate the number of individual prisoners who attend the gym as, from the figures provided by Limerick Prison, the numbers vary from 4 to 33 per session with the average being 18. Numbers of prisoners attend the school during the “ordinary school term”. For the reasons set out in paragraph 2.52 it is difficult to calculate the actual numbers attending the school on a daily basis.

It must be appreciated that prisoners who attend the woodwork shop or the gym do not attend for the whole day but only attend for a session and in certain cases for only one session per week. If they attend for two sessions this means that they do so to the exclusion of others.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 prison management identified 9 vacant workshops in the prison.

There are 2 workshops in the female prison which, though fitted out, are not open. One of these is a hairdressing educational facility. This would be of great benefit to the female prisoners.

The Transformation Team will address the question of the opening of the workshops.

### **Kitchen**

2.49 The **kitchen** has modern equipment. It operates a 28 day rolling menu for prisoners. It consistently receives awards for its excellence and in 2010 the kitchen was awarded the ‘Sapphire’ Award. Prisoners can achieve accreditation to FETAC Level 6.

2.50 The diet of prisoners is well attended to. While certain prisoners might complain about the food I am satisfied that, in this regard, the prison fulfils that which is required of it.

### **Laundry**

2.51 The **laundry** is well equipped with modern equipment. It caters for all laundry needs of the prison in addition to the laundry needs of all prisoners. Prisoners can complete a 9 month course comprising 7 modules leading to accreditation from the Guild of Cleaners and Launderers. This is the standard required for employment in any recognised laundry. The prisoners can thereafter achieve the SQA qualification. This further accreditation is required in order to work in a recognised commercial laundry. The accreditation process for the laundry is assessed by an outside agency from Scotland.

### **School**

2.52 There is a new and well equipped purpose built school in Limerick Prison. I stated in paragraph 3.6 of my Duties and Obligations Report that an independent education audit should be commissioned by the Irish Prison Service. On all of my visits to Limerick Prison and to other prisons where I had occasion to visit the schools it seemed to me that only a small number of prisoners appeared to be attending education. I am unable to reconcile this

with the published statistics of the numbers of prisoners who attend education in Limerick Prison and in other prisons. I, therefore, welcome the audit which has been undertaken by the Irish Prison Service and which I understand to be at an advanced stage. This audit should address, *inter alia*, the value for money of the present service, whether the schools are overstaffed or under utilised for the number of staff employed, whether the outcomes from the education provided is acceptable and whether the statistics give a true picture. I will welcome the publication of this audit.

### **Healthcare of prisoners**

- 2.53 I do not propose in this Report dealing in detail with the healthcare provided to prisoners. I will deal more comprehensively with same in a future annual report. Suffice is to say that despite the dedicated efforts of the permanent prison healthcare staff in the prison (nurses and medics) I am satisfied that prisoners do not receive that standard of primary or mental healthcare that is available to the general population as a whole.
- 2.54 A General Medical Practitioner is contracted to the prison to provide services to prisoners for a set number of hours each week. I do not have the expertise to comment on the appropriateness or otherwise of the hours spent by the Doctor in the prison or the level of healthcare provided. I will deal with the matter of healthcare in an annual report where I will be suggesting that an audit of the healthcare provided to prisoners should be undertaken. The contracted Doctor does not dispense methadone. Methadone is a feature of healthcare in prisons. Another Doctor, who attends the prison, deals with all methadone issues. This is not satisfactory as it presupposes that prisoners on or requiring methadone only require assistance when such Doctor attends the prison. This can leave certain prisoners at a disadvantage. It is a matter for the Irish Prison Service to ensure that best practice is followed in this regard.
- 2.55 Despite the determined efforts of the visiting Psychiatrist to the prison prisoners with mental health issues cannot be said to receive the same care as those in the general community.

- 2.56 Addiction services are provided by Merchants Quay. The services provided are of the highest level and are of benefit to those prisoners who can avail of such services. Not all prisoners have access to the addiction services due to the prevalence of gangs and the fact that a considerable number of prisoners are on protection. AA services are provided in the prison.
- 2.57 The prison is fortunate in having the services of an experienced Psychologist. The hours such Psychologist can offer to prisoners have been reduced. This reduces the effectiveness of the Psychologist.
- 2.58 There is no dedicated welfare service in the prison. The Probation Service has withdrawn from providing welfare services to Limerick Prison. However, this work has not gone away. This means that the welfare needs of prisoners are taken on by other bodies such as prison officers, chaplains, health service providers to name but a few. Despite the work done by such bodies the welfare needs of prisoners are not all met by these services.
- 2.59 I have not examined the role of the Probation Service in Limerick Prison as I intend dealing with this in the general context of prisons. Suffice is to say that the role of the Probation Service, which is of vital importance, has been restricted in Limerick Prison by the Probation Service.

### **Prisoners contact with family and the outside world**

- 2.60 Prisoners in all prisons maintain contact with their families, friends and the outside world by telephone, by letter and by visits.
- 2.61 There are not adequate telephones in Limerick Prison. At times these are out of order which creates tension in the prison.
- 2.62 Letters are channelled through the censor's office. There are adequate facilities for dealing with all mail. Prisoners' post has not always been dealt with as expeditiously as it should be. This problem has been common to all prisons. I brought the matter to the attention of the Director General of the

Irish Prison Service who has given an instruction as to how mail is to be dealt with in the future. I will keep this matter under review.

- 2.63 The visitor waiting area is accommodated outside the prison perimeter wall. This is the area in which visitors are processed prior to their entry into the prison. The needs of the visitors are catered for by volunteers from the Bedford Row Family Project. The area has basic services and equipment. Information is given to visitors as to what they can expect when entering the prison and how visits are conducted in the prison.
- 2.64 Visits can present difficulties in prisons that accommodate feuding gangs and prisoners on protection. It is particularly difficult in Limerick Prison. The arrangements made by prison management to try to ensure that visits offering the least chance of trouble are to be commended. This is achieved by scheduling visits. The majority of visits are open visits where prisoners can have face to face contact with their families or other visitors. Prison management are to be commended for endeavouring to ensure that such visits are conducted in a humane and dignified manner. On occasions prisoners are confined to screened visits. This can arise for a number of reasons such as breach of discipline or to frustrate the passing of contraband. Prison management must be constantly vigilant to ensure that decisions made to impose screened visits are reasonable. Family visits are also arranged for long term prisoners. Loss of contact with family should never be used as a punishment for breaches of prison discipline.
- 2.65 The visiting areas for open visits, screened visits and family visits are adequate except that the audio systems in the screened area are not adequate in that it is extremely difficult to hear if there is more than one visit taking place.

### **Reception area**

- 2.66 This is the area where prisoners are processed prior to their entry into the prison. The area was clean on all of my visits. There are 3 showers in the area. Only one was working on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011. The other 2 cubicles were used as storage areas. On 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 the call bells in the 2

holding cells were not working. Newly admitted prisoners who do not have a clean set of clothes are issued with clean prison clothes of an appropriate nature. They are issued with an 'Information for Persons in Custody' booklet. This booklet should be redrafted as it is silent on a number of important issues such as the existence and role of the Inspector of Prisons. The assessments of prisoners carried out on their arrival into the prison are not adequate. I refer to this in greater detail in paragraph 4.5. There is a separate Reception Area for female prisoners.

### **Library**

2.67 The library in Limerick Prison is one of the best equipped in the prison system. It is situated beside the school. It is equipped with computers and reading aids. The library has a wide selection of books and caters for many nationalities. The library is not open even for the hours that the school is meant to be open. An independent audit of the library system in all prisons should be carried out to ascertain, *inter alia*, the use being made of such facilities, the range of prisoners who can avail of the facilities and how to optimise the use of prison libraries.

### **Tuck shop**

2.68 The tuck shop is adequately provisioned. Many people that I spoke to including prisoners were critical of the prices charged in the tuck shop. I have been informed that the price list in the Tuck shop is revised each week to reflect prices paid by the prison for all items. I did not find any evidence of over charging but did not carry out a comprehensive study on this issue.

### **Practice of religion or other beliefs**

2.69 Prisoners on protection or some of those in gangs complained that they were unable to attend to their religious or other beliefs. The prison has a full time Roman Catholic Chaplain. Due to cut backs in certain areas the Chaplain, in addition to his contractual duties, has had to take on additional responsibilities such as welfare issues. This curtails his ability to carry out his primary functions.



### **Moving prisoners around the prison**

2.70 This is a problem in all prisons. Prisoners are escorted by prison officers around the prison as they are not permitted to wander freely. I have noted during my visits that prisoners are not always escorted on time to such places as the school, visits etc.

### **Video link to Court**

2.71 There is a video link between the prison and Limerick District Court. The Irish Prison Service, local prison management, the Courts Service in Limerick and the assigned District Court Judge in Limerick should be complimented for introducing and operating this service. The introduction of this service has led to considerable savings in both manpower and money as prison escorts to courts are very demanding on both resources. This service should be rolled out to other courts and should be replicated in other prisons. The service could then be expanded to facilitate family contact between prisoners either on remand or serving sentences in different prisons or as suggested in paragraph 2.78 A(4).

### **Other facilities**

2.72 There are excellent facilities in a new recently opened block in the main prison for medical purposes, dental purposes, chaplaincy, probation and others who provide services to prisoners.

### **Security issues**

2.73 I do not propose, for security purposes, disclosing security arrangements or procedures in Limerick Prison. Suffice is to say that all yards are covered by nets, a dedicated search procedure (with appropriate protocols) operates for all persons entering the prison, a dedicated drug dog is on duty, mandatory drug testing of prisoners is the norm and random targeted searches are carried out. The Operational Support Group (OSG) is the dedicated unit responsible for such initiatives. These measures have had the combined effect of reducing the amount of drugs and contraband entering the prison.

Prison management must always be sensitive to the searching procedures that apply to both prisoners and all others entering the prison to ensure that such persons' dignity and human rights are not infringed.

### **Visiting Committee**

- 2.74 A Prison Visiting Committee is appointed to each prison under the Prisons (Visiting Committees) Act 1925 and Prisons (Visiting Committees) Order 1925.
- 2.75 It is clear from the legislation that the function of the Visiting Committee is to visit, at frequent intervals, the prison to which they are appointed and hear any complaints which may be made to them by any prisoner. They are obliged to report to the Minister any abuses observed or found by them in the prison and to bring to his/her notice any repairs which they think may be urgently needed. The Visiting Committee has free access, either collectively or individually, to every part of their prison. They are entitled to focus on issues such as the quality of the accommodation and the catering, medical, educational, welfare services and recreational facilities in the prison.
- 2.76 I met with a representative of the Visiting Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2011. I was informed that the committee meets once a month and conducts an interim visit every second month. They meet in the conference room of the prison. They meet prisoners who have expressed a wish to see them in this room. The representative that I met explained that the committee does not walk the landings. Concerns regarding overcrowding and healthcare were raised with me. The representative did not wish to elaborate on these concerns.
- 2.77 From what I was told at my meeting with the representative of the Visiting Committee as outlined in paragraph 2.76 the committee does not carry out its mandate as laid out in the legislation referred to in paragraph 2.74.

### **Services provided by outside agencies**

- 2.78 In addition to the people who provide normal services to prisoners such as teachers, probation officers, external health workers etc. other persons and

organisations give assistance to prisoners in numbers of ways. I do not intend, in this Report, giving a finite list of all such service providers. By choosing three organisations I do not in any way take from the very worthwhile work of other outside agencies that are not mentioned in this Report.

**(A) Bedford Row Family Project**

- (1) Bedford Row Family Project is a Limerick based mainly voluntary group set up in 1999 by the Franciscan and Mercy Orders. It is part funded by the Irish Prison Service.
- (2) This Project, in addition to catering for the needs of prison visitors (paragraph 2.63), supports the families of prisoners. Most prisoners have addiction problems. Therefore, the Project works with the parents, the partners and the children of prisoners. They help children come to terms with their parents' imprisonment.
- (3) The Project is a half way house between those in prison and the other support agencies. They are not a housing agency or an employment agency.
- (4) It was suggested to me that the Bedford Row Family Project might be able to assist in the way contact is maintained between families and prisoners. It was suggested that a video link between Limerick Prison, which has such facilities, (paragraph 2.71) and the Bedford Row Centre or other appropriate centre(s) could be explored. Such a suggestion, which I feel has merit, would have to be looked at closely to ensure that there were no security implications for the prison. If such a link(s) were to be introduced strict protocols would have to be laid down for the operation of such links.

**(B) The Samaritans**

- (1) The Samaritans Organisation is a confidential emotional support service. The service is available 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may

lead to suicide. Volunteers offer support by responding to telephone calls, emails and letters. People can also have face to face meetings with members of the Samaritans. Samaritans' volunteers receive appropriate training in the areas in which they provide support.

- (2) Prisoners have a dedicated telephone line to the Samaritans which I am informed by prison management they have access to 24 hours a day.
- (3) If prisoners wished to meet with a member of the Samaritans such meetings used to be facilitated on Thursdays in the prison. This arrangement was discontinued some time ago. Discussions are taking place between the Samaritans and prison management with a view to having such visits recommence.
- (4) It is essential that confidentiality between prisoners and the Samaritans is not compromised and that one to one discussions with volunteers can take place. Prison management should be vigilant to ensure such confidentiality.

**(C) St. Vincent De Paul**

- (1) The St. Vincent De Paul members started working in Limerick Prison approximately 12 years ago. They have now built up a good working relationship with both prisoners and staff. They attend at the prison on Monday evenings. They see prisoners in the medical centre in the main prison and in the recreation room of the female prison. They meet prisoners in groups or individually if prisoners want to speak confidentially.
- (2) The St. Vincent De Paul runs a hostel which can accommodate 47 people in Limerick. This is used as a halfway house between prison and society. The normal stay for a prisoner is approximately one month.

- (3) The St. Vincent De Paul runs an educational facility for juveniles. They have 37 teachers in two centres and support approximately 120 at risk juveniles some of whom are the children of prisoners. They make the point that it is important that the children of prisoners stay in education in that, in their experience, prisoners are happy if they know that their children are being educated.
- (4) The St. Vincent De Paul provides some pocket money and clothes for prisoners.
- (5) Prisoners who wish to meet with members of St. Vincent De Paul place their names on a list which is maintained by the prison. This is a rolling list. The prison also refers all non nationals to the service.
- (6) The members of St. Vincent De Paul also act in a welfare capacity in seeking to be a bridge between prisoners and their families on the outside.

### **Identification of prison officers**

2.79 In practically all my Reports to date I have recommended that all prison personnel, while on duty, should wear appropriate identification. At the November Meeting I was informed by the Secretary General, Department of Justice and Equality that, as and from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011, all personnel will have been issued with such identification with a direction that same is to be worn while on duty.

## Chapter 3

### **Overcrowding**

- 3.1 In Chapter 11 of my Duties and Obligations Report I set out in detail the area of each of the cells in Limerick Prison. These ranged in size from 7.6m<sup>2</sup> to 9.49m<sup>2</sup> with one cell measuring 10.23m<sup>2</sup>. The smallest cells are in A and B Divisions.
- 3.2 In paragraph 2.3 of my Duties and Obligations Report I stated that cell sizes should conform to the following sizes:-
- (a) “For single occupancy – 7m<sup>2</sup> with a minimum of 2m between walls. Such cells should have in-cell sanitation. It would be preferable to have the sanitary facilities screened.*
- (b) For each additional prisoner – an additional 4m<sup>2</sup> (example: 2 prisoners – 11m<sup>2</sup>, 3 prisoners – 15m<sup>2</sup>, 4 prisoners – 19m<sup>2</sup>). Where two or more prisoners share a cell there must be in-cell sanitation which in all cases must be screened.”*
- 3.3 As of 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 the bed capacity of the male prison was stated by the Irish Prison Service to be 290 and of the female prison to be 34. On that date there were 298 prisoners in the male prison and 31 in the female prison.
- 3.4 Based on the criteria set out in paragraph 3.2 the bed capacity of the male prison excluding the Safety Observation Cell and the Close Supervision Cell in D1 should be 185. The bed capacity of the female prison excluding the Safety Observation Cell should be 24.
- 3.5 In order to set out in bleak detail the extent of the overcrowding I set out in Table 2 the number of cells on each landing, the proper capacity of such cells, the numbers in such cells on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011, the extent of the excess, whether there is in-cell sanitation and whether the prisoners are subject to restricted regimes.

**Table 2**

<b>Landing</b>	<b>Number of Cells</b>	<b>Capacity as per paragraph 3.2</b>	<b>Number on the 03/11/2011</b>	<b>Number in excess of bed capacity</b>	<b>Sanitation Y/N</b>	<b>Restricted regime Y/N</b>
A1	8	8	15	7	N	N
A2	10	10	18	8	N	N
A3	10	10	18	8	N	N
B1	7	7	15	8	N	Y
B2	10	10	18	8	N	Y
B3	10	10	20	10	N	Y
C2	30	30	45	15	Y	N
C3	24	24	40	16	Y	N
C4	24	24	36	12	Y	N
D1	4	4	5	1	Y	Y
D2	16	16	23	7	Y	N
D3	16	16	22	6	Y	N
D4	16	16	23	7	Y	Mixture of both
E Division	24	24	31	7	Y	N
<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>120</b>	-	-

- 3.6 It should be noted that the most severe overcrowding is found in A and B Divisions. The cells in these divisions do not have in-cell sanitation. All prisoners on B Division are under restricted regimes.
- 3.7 In the period covered by this review of Limerick Prison it is significant that on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2011, 329 male prisoners were accommodated in the prison. This is the highest number of prisoners in this prison since I took up my position as Inspector of Prisons on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008. It is also significant that on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011 the female prison population was also the highest since I took up my position as Inspector of Prisons standing at 41 prisoners.
- 3.8 When the male prison population in Limerick in the period under review exceeded 290 such additional prisoners were accommodated sleeping on the floor on mattresses. Similarly when the female prison population in the period under review exceeded 34 the extra prisoners were accommodated on mattresses on the floor.
- 3.9 I have, in many reports and most recently in my Annual Report 2010, referred to the term “bed capacity”. I have pointed out that this is a misleading term in that its use in the published daily statistics of the Irish prison population could be taken to suggest that the Irish prisons and in particular Limerick Prison are operating at or just above capacity. I have pointed out that the term is no more than a statement that either bunks or beds to accommodate those numbers are in place in the particular prison. This is true in Limerick Prison. It ignores the size of the cells, international best practice, Rulings of the European Court of Human Rights and Reports of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT). These statistics of stated bed capacity are misleading and if followed would mean that those commenting on the overcrowding or otherwise of Irish prisons and in particular of Limerick Prison would have an inaccurate picture as to the extent of the overcrowding at any particular time.
- 3.10 I stated in my Duties and Obligations Report at paragraph 11.17 that:-



*“If adequate, relevant, structured activity was available to the prisoners, if appropriate services and regimes were in place and the prisoners were out of their cells for a considerable part of the day a case could be made for accommodating two prisoners in the cells in C and D Blocks. This case cannot be made at the present time because of the negative aspects of the prison, the lack of services and regimes and the threat to prisoner safety”.*

This statement is equally true as of the date of my last visit to the prison - 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

At the November Meeting I was informed that when the new wing of the Midlands Prison opens in the first half of 2012 the overcrowding of Limerick Prison will be alleviated.

- 3.11 In Chapter 3 of my Duties and Obligations Report I set out the services and regimes that must be available to prisoners. I do not intend reiterating what the services and regimes should be. Suffice is to say that prisoners should be able to avail of these and engage in adequate, relevant and structured activity for a minimum period each day.
- 3.12 I have stated in many reports that the physical accommodation of prisoners and the regimes and services available in prisons are inseparable as the services and regimes must be sufficient for the number of prisoners accommodated. Therefore, it goes without saying, that even if the numbers in prisons comply with best practice, these prisons can, none the less, be overcrowded if the regimes and services are not adequate.
- 3.13 The services and regimes in Limerick Prison are not adequate.
- 3.14 The situation is further exacerbated by the numbers of prisoners classed as protection prisoners most of whom are on effective “23 hour lock up” and the presence of gangs in the prison.

- 3.15 I accept that not all prisoners in prison who are not on protection will be available to engage in activities for a variety of reasons including - being on punishment, at court, being sick etc.
- 3.16 Limerick Prison is overcrowded having regard to the two relevant criteria - (a) the physical lack of accommodation, and (b), the fact that prisoners do not have the facility to be engaged in adequate, relevant and structured activity.
- 3.17 I was informed at the November Meeting that the Transformation Team will address these issues.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Issues that should have been addressed prior to this Report**

- 4.1 In Chapter 4 of my Annual Report 2010 titled “*The way forward*” I set out in clear and unambiguous terms what should be provided in prisons by the Irish Prison Service, by local management and by prison officers to ensure that prisons complied with best international practice and to ensure that the human rights of prisoners were vindicated.
- 4.2 In paragraph 4.28 of my Annual Report 2010, I stated that I would expect that as and from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011, I would not have to comment on the following issues:-
- (a) Dirty prisons or areas of prisons.
  - (b) Unpainted areas of prisons.
  - (c) Unacceptable conditions of cells.
  - (d) Broken, out of commission or leaking equipment.
  - (e) Broken windows.

This Report on Limerick Prison speaks for itself on these issues. In this connection I wish to reiterate the comments made in paragraph 4.35 of my Annual Report 2010.

- 4.3 In my Annual Report 2010, I stated that each prison should have a Dedicated Committal Area, a High Support Unit and a Drug Free Support Unit.
- 4.4 I stated in paragraph 4.49 of my Annual Report 2010 that:-

*“The Irish Prison Service and local management in each prison should dedicate themselves to the provision of the three types of areas/units as referred to in paragraphs 4.37 to 4.48. I would expect that an announcement signalling the dedication of such areas/units in all relevant prisons should be made within six months of the date of this*

*report. Such an announcement should be accompanied by a time scale for the opening of these areas/units”.*

The timescale for the dedication of such areas/units or an announcement accompanied by a timescale for the opening of these areas/units fell on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011. As of the date of this Report no such areas/units have been identified in Limerick Prison.

I was informed at the November Meeting by the Director of Corporate Services, Irish Prison Service that appropriate areas/units for use as a Dedicated Committal Area, a High Support Unit and a Drug Free Support Unit will be identified in Limerick Prison by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011. I will expect that timelines will be given for the opening of such areas/units. I will refer to this in the first of my proposed short reports referred to in paragraph 1.14 and Appendix A.

#### **Dedicated Committal Area**

- 4.5 All new committals/remands to the prison should be assessed in a Dedicated Committal Area where prisoners should be detained in separate cells pending such assessment. They should be seen by, *inter alia*, a doctor, a nurse, a governor, a chief officer, a chaplain and an industrial manager. Only after an appropriate assessment should such prisoners be accommodated either on a landing in the prison, in a specialist unit or transferred to another prison as appropriate. In normal circumstances this assessment should not take longer than 24 hours. This assessment should identify any risk associated with the placement of the prisoner in the prison with a plan for the management of such risk if identified.

A thorough assessment as envisaged above is not carried out at present in Limerick Prison despite all prisoners being seen, on committal, by a member of staff, a nurse and doctor (if on duty). Prisoners then join the prison population with the choice of cell, it appears, being more dependent on whether the prisoner knows someone in the prison or comes from a defined geographic area rather than an in-depth assessment as to any risk that might be

associated with such placement. This practice has, in other institutions, ended in tragic circumstances.

### **High Support Unit**

4.6 It is of the utmost urgency that a High Support Unit for vulnerable persons be provided in all prisons. It is particularly important in the case of Limerick Prison as the prison does not, at present, have the support of the In-Reach Team from the Central Mental Hospital as do those prisons in the greater Dublin and Leinster areas. A High Support Unit must be properly staffed and have the benefit of either the In-Reach Team from the Central Mental Hospital or a similar team. Such a team should be under the direction of a consultant psychiatrist. Prisoners in such a unit should be assessed on a daily basis by the relevant medical team and where appropriate should be transferred to the Central Mental Hospital, to another appropriate medical facility, back to the main prison or to another prison. The establishment of such a High Support Unit in Limerick should not be used as an excuse for not transferring prisoners to the Central Mental Hospital or other medical facility where the prisoners' needs would be best catered for. The High Support Unit should not be used as a long term facility, neither, should it be used for accommodation, management or any other purpose. The opening of such a unit would, based on the anecdotal experience of Mountjoy Prison (where such a unit was opened in December 2010), contribute to the reduction of time spent by prisoners in Safety Observation Cells and would help in the reduction of self harm and suicide. It would be a dedicated facility for prisoners in an acute disturbed phase of serious mental illness or for those requiring increased observation for physical illness. It would be a unit with increased observation by appropriately trained staff and nurses but would only be used as a short term intervention facility. The size of such a unit for Limerick Prison should be dictated by the needs of the prison.

### **Drug Free Support Unit**

4.7 Limerick Prison does not have a Drug Free Support Unit. There are a number of prisoners, not only in Limerick Prison but in all prisons in the Irish prison system, who wish to either remain drug free or try to become drug free.

Limerick, in common with all closed prisons, should have a Drug Free Support Unit.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Prison staff facilities**

- 5.1 My comments on prison staff facilities are informed by a meeting with the Prison Officers Association, my conversations with individual prison officers, my conversations with others who work in the prison and my own observations of the facilities provided.
- 5.2 There is adequate car parking for all prison staff.
- 5.3 There is a large canteen which is clean and bright. This is operated by an outside agency and closes at 2pm - Monday to Friday. On Saturdays and Sundays prison officers bring in food by arrangement from a local source for consumption in the canteen. Prison officers operate the canteen at weekends. This arrangement does not compromise the security of the prison.
- 5.4 There is accommodation comprising approximately 20 rooms for the use of prison officers. These rooms are allocated subject to agreed protocols.
- 5.5 There are adequate showers and locker rooms for staff.
- 5.6 There is a gym, a TV room, a snooker room for all officers and a rest room for female staff. All of these are well appointed.
- 5.7 There are offices for organisations such as the POA, Staff Support and Health and Safety.
- 5.8 There are facilities for tea making and the preparation of snacks adjacent to the General Office, adjacent to the Control Room and in the PSEC offices. There is a night canteen on B1 Landing.

5.9 Prison officers have access to the large gym and recreation hall in the main prison during their recreation times provided such times coincide with prisoner lock up.



## Chapter 6

### Major concerns

- 6.1 I have stated in paragraph 1.9 that my concerns are informed by the physical conditions of the prison as observed by me, by my observations of those working in the prison, by my observations of prisoners, by my conversations with a wide section of people including, *inter alia*, prison management, prison officers, prisoners, prison visitors, interested persons, the many people and organisations that provide services to prisoners both in the prison and outside and my observations generally.
- 6.2 It would be incorrect in a comprehensive Report such as this to import into this chapter concerns raised by one individual, a class of individuals or an organisation without satisfying myself that such concerns were reasonable and not prompted by ulterior motives.
- 6.3 A certain number of the concerns as set out in this chapter are self evident from the preceding chapters of this report. In all cases I am satisfied that such other concerns are reasonable as I have not relied on one source as authority for these concerns but have cross checked with other sources and have in many cases witnessed some or all of the issues which give rise to these concerns.
- 6.4 I accept that it is no easy task to manage or work in a prison. Despite these difficulties I am satisfied that the vast majority of staff in Limerick Prison seek to provide humane conditions for the prisoners accommodated in the prison.
- 6.5 I am satisfied that management and staff, in many cases, “go the extra mile” for prisoners in their care.
- 6.6 The deployment of staff and the appropriateness of the numbers of staff working in the prison are a matter for local management and the Irish Prison Service.

6.7 Throughout this Report I have identified many matters of concern. I do not intend reiterating all of these as they are self evident from the Report. However, the following concerns are major concerns which must be addressed. I will expect, that within 4 months of the date of this Report, the management of Limerick Prison will publish a report setting out clearly their response to those issues in this Report not dealt with in this chapter or referred to in Appendix A with a timeframe for addressing such concerns. This report from prison management must be specific, reasonable and not aspirational. The report must also specify what actions will be taken as interim measures pending the implementation in full of all programmes.

(a) **Overcrowding**

This has been addressed in detail in Chapter 3 of this Report. The position is worst in A and B Divisions. It appears that the options are either to replace these Divisions or refurbish same to a standard that would meet best international practice.

(b) **Safety Observation and Close Supervision Cells**

This is addressed in detail in this Report.

(c) **Low level abuse and intimidation of prisoners**

This includes, *inter alia*, reference to prisoners' ethnic backgrounds (which if outlined in graphic detail would only feed a frenzy of public comment which might take from the serious concerns expressed in this paragraph), shouting at prisoners, threats of transfer to other prisons, not respecting confidentiality issues, intimidation of prisoners to withdraw complaints or not make complaints, goading prisoners, over use of P19 procedures and the general attitude of some staff.

The low level abuse and intimidation of prisoners was found in both the male and the female prisons and is not confined to Limerick Prison.

I am satisfied that it is prison policy that abuse and/or intimidation of any description is not tolerated by prison management. This low level abuse and intimidation is perpetrated by a small number of prison officers. I accept it is difficult to identify the perpetrators but this cannot be used as an excuse for not dealing with such undisciplined conduct.

It is for the Irish Prison Service and local management to ensure that appropriately trained officers are allocated to those parts of the prison, or to those situations, where such undisciplined conduct is most likely to occur.

I was informed at the November Meeting that the Irish Prison Service is introducing a specific programme for the training of all officers who will come in contact with female prisoners.

(d) **Prisoner in a cell on D1**

The situation has been explained in paragraph 2.24.

(e) **Lack of workshops**

The problems have been highlighted in this Report.

(f) **Lack of recreational facilities**

The lack of such facilities is well documented in this Report.

(g) **Segregation of prisoners**

It would seem that prisoners are segregated as much by who they know or the geographic areas that they come from as by any other criteria.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 a prisoner who had been assaulted a number of days earlier was placed on protection and locked up for 23 hours a day. He was the victim. The perpetrator was not subjected to any confined regime. Such arbitrary method of segregation can, not alone, disadvantage prisoners in areas such as recreation, school etc. but can

further dehumanise them by effectively imposing a further punishment in addition to the punishment of imprisonment.

(h) **Healthcare of prisoners**

This problem is documented in this Report.

(i) **Record keeping**

As can be seen from paragraphs 2.9 and 2.32 appropriate records are not being kept relating to the placement and detention of prisoners in Safety Observation and Close Supervision Cells. Despite the new procedures referred to in paragraphs 2.9 and 2.32 prison governors and senior officers must be proactive in ensuring that such cells are used for purpose and that proper records are maintained.

(j) **CCTV**

Numbers of cameras have not been functioning for some considerable time. Certain areas of the prison are not covered by CCTV. The Transformation Team will address this issue.

(k) **Integrated Sentence Management**

This, according to prison management, is not operating in the prison. The Transformation Team will address this issue.

(l) **Educational facilities**

This has been well ventilated in paragraph 2.52 of this Report. The education audit is awaited.

(m) **Dedicated Committal Area, High Support Unit and Drug Free Support Unit**

These matters have been adequately referred to in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.7.

## Appendix A

	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Reference in Report</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Date action required by</b>
1	Toilet patrol for A & B Divisions during periods of lock up	Paragraph 2.18	Governor	28/11/2011
2	Repair flushing mechanism in toilet in Safety Observation Cell in D1	Paragraph 2.25	Governor	28/11/2011
3	Yards, urinals etc. to be cleaned	Paragraph 2.35	Governor	28/11/2011
4	Toilets in D Recreation hall to be cleaned	Paragraph 2.37	Governor	28/11/2011
5	Identification of prison personnel	Paragraph 2.79	Governor	01/12/2011
6	All A & B Divisions be clean & equipment in wash/slop out areas repaired	Paragraph 2.11	Governor	31/12/2011
7	Identification of a Dedicated Committal Area, High Support Unit and Drug Free Support Unit	Paragraph 4.4	Director of Corporate Services	31/12/2011
8	Review of prisoner in D1	Paragraph 2.24	Irish Prison Service	01/01/2012
9	Report to Minister on 1 to 8 above	Paragraph 1.14	Inspector of Prisons	16/01/2012
10	Proper records and signage relating to Safety Observation & Close Supervision Cells to be in place	Paragraphs 2.9 & 2.32	Governor	16/01/2012
11	Temporary replacement of broken windows in A & B Divisions	Paragraph 2.12	Governor & Irish Prison Service	To be advised
12	Report to Minister on 10 and 11 above	Paragraph 1.14	Inspector of Prisons	01/03/2012
13	Options for A & B Divisions (refurbishment or replacement)	Paragraph 2.20	Transformation Team	01/04/2012

14	Address issue of no recreation areas for A & B Divisions	Paragraph 2.36	Transformation Team	01/04/2012
15	To review the lack of time prisoners spend in yards and at recreation	Paragraphs 2.39 & 2.40	Transformation team	01/04/2012
16	Review opening of workshops	Paragraph 2.48	Transformation Team	01/04/2012
17	Review the CCTV system	Paragraph 6.7(J)	Transformation Team	01/04/2012
18	Integrated Sentence Management to be introduced	Paragraph 6.7(K)	Transformation Team	01/04/2012
19	Improve Regimes & Services	Paragraph 3.13 to 3.17	Transformation Team	01/04/2012
20	Response to concerns other than those referred to in this Table	Paragraph 6.7	Governor	01/04/2012
21	Report to Minister on 13 to 20 above	Paragraph 1.14	Inspector of Prisons	01/05/2012
22	Overcrowding to be alleviated	Paragraph 3.10	Irish Prison Service	01/06/2012
23	Report to Minister on 22 above	Paragraph 1.14	Inspector of Prisons	15/06/2012