

**A report by the Inspector of Prisons  
Judge Michael Reilly into the circumstances  
surrounding the death of Prisoner A  
on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014  
while on temporary release**

**\*Please note that names have been removed to anonymise this Report**

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**Office Ref: 2014/A**

**A report by the Inspector of Prisons Judge Michael Reilly  
into the circumstances surrounding the death of Prisoner A  
on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 while on temporary release**

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

Judge Michael Reilly  
Inspector of Prisons

31<sup>st</sup> March 2014

## **Preface**

Prisoner A was a 20 year old woman when she died on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 while on temporary release.

I offer my sincere condolences to the family of the deceased. I endeavoured to contact the family of the deceased but my letters went unanswered. Therefore, I did not meet with any family member.

There are no matters of concern disclosed in this Report.

I would like to point out that the deceased's name has been removed to anonymise this Report.

Judge Michael Reilly

Inspector of Prisons

31<sup>st</sup> March 2014

## **Inspector of Prisons Investigation Report**

### **General information**

1. The deceased was a 20 year old woman who came from the Dublin area. She is survived by her daughter and her family.
2. The deceased was committed to the Dóchas Centre on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Her release date was to be 25<sup>th</sup> February 2014.
3. The deceased was granted Weekly Reviewable Temporary Release on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 to, *inter alia*, engage in a Community Support Scheme.
4. The deceased died on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014.
5. It is clear from my investigation that the deceased had experienced a chaotic life prior to her imprisonment with drugs and alcohol playing a significant and damaging part.

### **Sequence of events**

6. The deceased was committed to prison on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Her imprisonment on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013 was for theft and handling stolen property.
7. On 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2013 the deceased was referred by the Operations Directorate of the Irish Prison Service for assessment as to her suitability for engagement in the Community Support Scheme.
8. On 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013 a review meeting was held to discuss the case of the deceased. This was attended by:-
  - Management officials from the Dóchas Centre and Mountjoy Prison.

- A representative from the Care after Prison Project. This project is based in the Carmelite Community Centre in Dublin.
  - The Co-located Community Return Unit.
9. It was stated at the review meeting referred to in paragraph 8 that the deceased was drug free at that time, that she suffered from periods of depression and had self harm marks. She had a three year old daughter and could return to her mother's house to live on her release. Her family had links with Exchange House. The deceased was well behaved and had expressed an interest in pursuing education and perhaps enrolling for her Junior Certificate.
10. On 27<sup>th</sup> September 2013 a representative from the Care after Prison Project confirmed by email to the ISM Officer in the Dóchas Centre that the deceased had a place to live in the following terms – *“I have spoken to (name of the deceased's) mother and she confirmed her address and is more than willing to support her”*.
11. On 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013 the Governor of the Dóchas Centre submitted an application for Weekly Reviewable Temporary Release for the deceased to the Operations Directorate of the Irish Prison Service.
12. A risk assessment was carried out and the deceased was cleared for Weekly Reviewable Temporary Release. Matters taken into consideration in the risk assessment included the following:-
- Apart from two periods of days for the non payment of fines, which she was not detained on, this was the deceased's first time in custody.
  - Her offences were for non violent matters.
  - Her sentence was short in duration.
  - There was an offer of community support from the Care after Prison Project.

- She was assessed as suitable for the Community Support Scheme.
  - She had accommodation.
13. The deceased was released on Weekly Reviewable Temporary Release on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013.
14. The deceased's terms of release included:-
- To engage with the Community Support Scheme.
  - To reside at a given address. This was her mother's address.
  - To sign on daily at a named Garda Station in Dublin.
  - To sign on at the Dóchas Centre on a weekly basis.
15. Immediately on her release on 1<sup>st</sup> October and up to the date of her death on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 key workers from the Care after Prison Project which is based in the Carmelite Community Centre worked in tandem with the Probation Service to provide a **VERY HIGH** level of assistance for the deceased. This consisted of proactive, appropriate and relevant intervention on a very regular basis.
16. The deceased did not abide by all the terms of her temporary release. Her chaotic earlier lifestyle undoubtedly contributed to her lack of appreciation that she should follow the advice being given by key professionals subsequent to her release. Her choice of social companions and their lifestyle which included using heroin and other substances posed great difficulties for those assigned to her case. In the interests of privacy I have consciously not gone into further details surrounding the deceased's life.
17. Despite not complying with all the terms of her temporary release the services detailed earlier in this Report were still available to the deceased and the key workers were proactive in this regard.

18. On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014 the deceased was admitted to hospital having overdosed on drugs that morning. She later discharged herself from hospital and refused to go back to hospital. She was advised by her key workers including social workers and her mother to return to hospital but to no avail.
19. On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 the deceased died in her mother's home.

### **Findings**

20. Despite her young years the deceased had led a chaotic life where drugs were a constant feature.
21. The decision of the Governor to put the deceased forward for consideration for Temporary Release was appropriate and reasonable in the circumstances.
22. A thorough assessment was carried out prior to the release of the deceased.
23. The deceased did have a home to go to on her release.
24. The deceased was linked with appropriate services in the community on her release.
25. In view of my findings set out in paragraphs 21 to 23 the decision made by the Irish Prison Service to release the deceased on temporary release was reasonable and justified.
26. The services in the community did provide a high level of assistance to the deceased from the time of her release - 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 to the time of her untimely death – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014.
27. The deceased did not, at all times, abide by all the conditions of her temporary release. Despite this finding it would have been perverse, in the circumstances of this particular case, to have had her returned to prison for breaches of her conditions of her temporary release. My reason for making this observation is that whenever the deceased was to be released from prison, targeted

interventions by those agencies providing therapeutic services would be needed, and to interrupt such services as were put in place when she was granted temporary release would have been counter productive with her permanent release date being just weeks away.