

**IRISH PRISONS INSPECTORATE**

***SHELTON ABBEY***

**SHELTON ABBEY DETENTION CENTRE  
INSPECTION:**

**10TH OCTOBER - 15TH OCTOBER 2005**

# **Role of the Irish Inspector of**

## **Prisons and Places of Detention**

The Office of the Inspector was established by an order signed by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform on the 21st February 2002. There is a statutory provision in the forthcoming Prisons Authority Bill for the establishment of a Prisons Inspectorate. The following are the terms of reference for the Inspector of Prisons and Places of Detention.

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

To -

- (a) Inspect and report, as the Inspector considers appropriate, to the Minister on prisons and places of detention under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
- (b) Report in particular on conditions in those institutions and on the regimes in place for prisoners and detainees.
- (c) Investigate and report on any specific issue referred to the Inspectorate by the Minister.
- (d) Submit to the Minister an Annual Report on the activities of the Inspectorate.

### **GUIDELINES**

In carrying out an inspection of any prison or place of detention, the Inspector will, in general terms, have regard to such matters as:

- (a) the quality of the regime
- (b) the attitude of staff and inmates
- (c) the health, safety and well-being of prisoners
- (d) the condition of the buildings
- (e) questions of humanity and propriety

- (f) any general pattern which may indicate possible inadequacies in the management of the prison.

As the terms of reference provide, the Minister may also request the Inspector to investigate and report on specific issues or incidents connected with the running of any prison or place of detention. Furthermore, the Inspector may raise issues of concern, arising out of an investigation or an inspection, either with local management, the Director General of the Prisons or the Minister. To facilitate the Inspector in carrying out his functions, he may consider complaints from prisoners but only to the extent that such complaints are relevant to the functions of the Inspector. The Inspector will, not later than four months following the end of each calendar year, submit a written report to the Minister on his activities during the year.

It is intended that the annual report will be published. The Inspector will also furnish the Minister with such information relating to his activities as the Minister may require from time to time.

The functions outlined above will also apply to any child-detention centres and remand centres designated by the Minister under Section 150 of the Children Act, 2001.

These terms of reference may be further refined in the forthcoming Prisons Bill in the light of the experience gained in the interim. The Inspector will also be entitled to report and make recommendations, in the light of experience gained, on the contents of the legislation which will eventually make statutory provision for the Prisons Inspectorate.

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**REPORT ON VISIT TO SHELTON ABBEY DETENTION CENTRE**

**COMMENCING THE 10th OCTOBER 2005 TO 15th OCTOBER 2005**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 On the 10th October to 15th October 2005 an inspection of Shelton Abbey Detention Centre was carried out by the Inspectorate Team which consisted of:

Mr. Justice Dermot Kinlen	Inspector of Prisons and Places of Detention
James Woods	Special Adviser to Inspector
Dr. Jim Ledwith	Consultant
Prof. William Binchy	Consultant
Prof. Paul McCutcheon	Consultant

1.2 The purpose of inspection is to identify issues and take note of any areas of concern and good practice which may pertain.

Date: Mr. Justice Dermot Kinlen  
Inspector of Prison and Places of Detention

## **2. Background**

2.1 Shelton Abbey is an open detention centre for male offenders from 19 years old upwards. It is located approximately two miles north of Arklow, Co. Wicklow and ten miles from Wicklow town. It caters for both short-sentence offenders as well as long-sentence offenders who are approaching the end of their sentence. [In fact one of the problems raised, with the inspectorate, was that they receive offenders doing too short a sentence and therefore had problems placing them on programmes or in education as they were merely “passing through”.] The entrance from the main road is signed “Shelton” which apparently refers to Shelton Wood. A sign for “Shelton Abbey” should also be erected.

2.2 Shelton Abbey was originally the home of Lord and Lady Wicklow, it was also an hotel and was then taken over as a college for forestry students. It was purchased by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in the early 1970’s and has remained an open detention centre since. Some years later an adjoining farm of approximately 70 acres was purchased and this

farm has been tilled over the years providing potatoes, vegetables and fruit for use within the prison system. There are also approximately 25 acres of gardens attached to Shelton Abbey which produce a great range of flowers, shrubs, and some vegetables.

2.3 There is approximately a half-mile-long entrance driveway from the public road to the institution, which is lined with trees on both sides. On reaching the entrance, one is met with open lawns, a nine-hole pitch-and-putt course and the buildings on the right, which are very impressive with very large windows at ground-floor level, various high-level chimneys a clock/bell tower and granite pillars at the front doors entrance. It is an entirely different concept from a closed prison where everything is security orientated with high walls, razor-edged wire and generally a concrete jungle without any greenery. The entire buildings, grounds, lawns and garden are surrounded by Shelton Wood.

2.4 It has a bed-capacity for 60 offenders and the accommodation consists of two single rooms with the rest in dormitory-style living. The total in custody on the first day of our inspection was 45.

### **3. Governor's Briefing**

3.1 The Governor welcomed the Inspectorate team on our arrival on 10th October 2005. He introduced his chief officer, Ms. McCormack, and our liaison officer, Mr. Parkes. He apologised for the non-attendance of the Assistant Governor as he was on leave and out of the country. The Governor also explained that

he had to attend a meeting in the prison service headquarters on Wednesday and that he was attending a course on Thursday and Friday which was booked well in advance of the dates of our inspection. He very much regretted that these dates clashed with the dates of the inspection. However, we were very well looked after by the acting Governor, Ms. McCormack, and by the liaison officer, both of whom were extremely efficient and helpful.

- 3.2 The Governor outlined that he had been appointed Governor to Shelton Abbey only at the beginning of this year (2005) and had had problems on arrival with the centre's threatened closure or change of management and staff from prison-service-operated to civilian-operated. The Minister had announced this changeover in the event of there being no agreement between the P.O.A. and Minister regarding the proposed change in work practice within the Prison Service. However, since then the union has agreed to the proposed organisational change in the Irish Prison Service and the operation of Shelton Abbey will remain within the Prison Service. The uncertainty regarding the future of the centre has been going on for almost two years resulting in very low morale among staff, very little maintenance work being carried out, very low number of offenders being sent to the centre and a very 'doom and gloom' air about the whole place. The Governor claims that is all now in the past and that they are all looking forward and working hard to re-establish the centre as a vibrant, progressive rehabilitative institution.



3.3 He has 38 staff in total and is operating within an overtime budget of 261 hours per week. His staffing levels are 6.5 short of approved posts on the duty roster and he has had to “trim back” on overtime to live within the budget allocation. The areas affected in the cutbacks have been escorts, some court appearances and the transfer of officers. The proposed new agreement will allocate a further 9.5 staff to his centre. The Governor thinks that these additional staff will make a big difference to the management of the centre and will develop areas that have been the target of cutbacks or that have been non-operational for a considerable time. The new organisational change will also entail change-of-work practice for a number of staff with some officers changing entirely from their present role to new positions such as trades staff giving up their trades work and going onto disciplinary duties, clerks doing likewise, and other staff in the kitchen, garden, etc., being replaced by industrial grade staff. The changes are due to take place on 12/11/05 when the centre is going onto the new hourly roster.

3.4 We were informed that the centre has no psychologist or psychiatrist. They were not really sure if the services of a psychiatrist were needed as anyone with mental health problems is not generally sent to Shelton Abbey and anyone showing any signs of psychiatric illness is returned to his prison of origin. The Governor stated that the doctor considers the greater need is for counsellors rather than for a psychiatrist. They feel that they could do with the services of a psychologist for at least two days per week.

- 3.5 The Governor gave a rundown on how offender vacancies are filled from other prisons and the work at the centre offenders are engaged in which consists of education, gardening, painting/decorating, cleaning and kitchen work. The Governor aims to keep the centre at full capacity and has increased the accommodation from 56 beds to 60 beds by changing the use of some rooms. He stated that he had no library but is in the process of renovating a room for library use and that he has an agreement with Arklow Library for them to provide ten hours of librarian service per week which will be of tremendous benefit to the centre.
- 3.6 He said that in 2004 the farm attached to the centre was leased out as the farm manager had been killed in an accident and consequently he had nobody to operate it. So it was rented out for a year. [The staff have developed a small area at the entrance to the farm, and set it out with small shrubs/miniature trees and a lawn. They have a large stone erected on a plinth and engraved with a tribute to the late farm manager. It is a lovely memorial to a person who was extremely well liked and remembered for all the work he had done on the farm.] The contractor sowed the farm in winter barley. The Governor outlined that he had had discussions with Teagasc officials regarding the future use of the farm and that they were most helpful in drawing up training modules for its operation. They also assisted him in applying for the farm-aid grant.
- 3.7 The Governor stated that he had an average of three staff per day on sick leave and had had three staff on continuous sick leave for more than six

months. The educational facilities were going to be improved. They carry out random urine-analysis tests to check if the residents are drug-free. The test results that return positive are normally cannabis-based but there are times they get opiate positive results. Prisoners who tests are found to be positive are returned to their prison of origin as there are no treatment facilities at the centre for drug addicts and as it is an open centre it is easier for the offenders to get illegal drugs into this setting. It is also an abuse of the trust placed in the offender on coming to this centre that he will remain illegal-drug-free for his duration.

3.8 This concluded our briefing with the Governor. We then began going through the business plans for the centre. As in other institutions the business plans are very detailed but in many ways not implemented for various reasons including. One wonders why so much time and effort is put into business plans with such doubtful results. However in fairness, the fact that the centre was designated as going to close and the resulting malaise would explain some but not all of the negative results.

#### **4. Business Plans**

### **Business Plans for Shelton Abbey for year ending 2004 (Summary)**

#### **4.1 1. Financial Management**

##### **Target 1.1 Manage the overall budget allocation for 2004**

1.1.1 Conduct budget allocation with heads of function by March 2004.

Result: Done.

1.1.2 Identify where costs can be curtailed.

Result: Done.

1.1.3 Evaluate operation of the budget for the year.

Result: Overspent, Yes.

By how much - figures not available to the Inspectorate.

**Target 1.2 Implement new Financial Management System as it is rolled out into institution.**

1.2.1 Install new Fin Mgt Sym as it is rolled out by H.Q. to institution.

Result: Mostly done.

1.2.2 Train appropriate staff.

Result: No training.

1.2.3 Implement the new system.

Result: Partly done.

**2. Operational Management**

**Target 2.1 Ensure planning is in place to cover all emergency situations.**

2.1.1 Conduct review of all emergency planning by June 2004.

Result: Done.

2.1.2 Implement changes as necessary to improve plan.

Result: No changes made, not required.

2.1.3 Keep staff trained to within budgetary constraints.

Result: Limited staff training.

2.1.4 Review security.

Result: Ongoing

2.1.5 Hold regular emergency plan tests.

Result: Not done. It is an open centre therefore emergency situations seldom arise. [A fire-evacuation drill was carried out on 7th October 2005 post-dating the completion of the pre-inspection questionnaire on the 30th September 2005 in which was stated that no fire drill evacuations had taken place in previous year.]

**Target 2.2 Continue to record all assaults manually until computer system is in place.**

2.2.1 Record assaults on staff and offenders.

Result: No assaults to record.

2.2.2 Introduce new I.T. System for recording assaults.

Result: Programme just introduced in 2005.

2.2.3 Keep accurate details of assault.

Result: Yes, if and when they occur.

**Target 2.3 Review security on an ongoing basis.**

2.3.1 Review security on an ongoing basis.

Result: Yes, done.

2.3.2 Make alterations appropriate to this institution.

Result: Yes, done.

**3. Human Resource Management**

**Target 3.1 Manage staff resources within overall budget.**

3.2.1 Discuss budget with Financial Director within H.Q.

Result: Yes, done.

3.2.2 Make staff aware of constraints within budget.

Result: Yes, done.

3.2.3 Arrange new work rosters within the institution.

Result: Did not happen in 2004.

3.2.4 Review all systems on a weekly basis.

Result: Yes, done.

**Target 3.2 Implement whatever new attendance arrangements are agreed with the P.O.A.**

3.2.1 Introduce new agreement.

Result: Not agreed in 2004.

3.2.2 Keep staff informed of agreement.

Result: Not applicable.

3.2.3 Review implementation.

Result: No agreement to review.

**Target 3.3 Introduce PMDS for Prison Service grades from Assistant Governor to Governor (and equivalent grades).**

3.3.1 Introduce PMDS when available.

Result: Commenced in 2004.

3.3.2 Introduce training when available.

Result: Yes, done.

3.3.3 Review after introduction & training.

Result: Not completed in 2004, done since.

**Target 3.4 Ensure adequate number of trained staff for emergency situations.**

3.4.1 Keep staff training updated.

Result: Only very limited training done.

3.4.2 Review the training on a regular basis.

Result: Reviewed, but not as much taking place as management would like (budgetary restraints).

#### **4. Regime Development**

##### **Target 4.1 Prioritise education, vocational training & prison welfare against background of budgetary restrictions.**

- 4.1.1 Review all services to offenders.  
Result: Done.
- 4.1.2 Identify crucial needs.  
  
Result: Done.
- 4.1.3 Make budget allowances for regime & welfare needs.  
  
Result: Yes, done.
- 4.1.4 Access all services to see that they are given full support.  
  
Result: Yes, ongoing.

##### **Target 4.2 Provide for the personal well-being of prisoners, including spiritual care and suicide awareness.**

- 4.2.1 Make sure that on reception all offenders are aware of services available to them.  
  
Result: Yes, made aware. Interviewed following day of arrival.
- 4.2.2 Give the Chaplain and the Probation & Welfare Officer the resources to give full and fair service to offenders.  
  
Result: Yes, being done.

##### **Target 4.3 Provide care and rehabilitation programmes ensuring equality of access for all prisoners.**

- 4.3.1 Provide the necessary care for offenders who may have special needs.



Result: Being done.

- 4.3.2 Make sure that there is confidentiality for offenders who require special treatment.

Result: Yes.

- 4.3.3 Maintain family contacts between offenders and their families.

Result: Yes, being done.

## **5. Tackle drug problem in prisons.**

### **Target 5.1 Continue to keep institution drug-free by regular urine-analysis testing.**

- 5.1.1 Continue to have Shelton Abbey a drug-free centre.

Result: Yes, as far as possible.

- 5.1.2 Early action with any breach of drug abuse.

Result: Yes, being done.

## **6. Prisoner Healthcare**

### **Target 6.1 Implement agreed healthcare standards as appropriate, to ensure medical and psychiatric care for prisoners are consistent with standards that apply in the community generally.**

- 6.1.1 Have offenders seen by Medical Officer on committal.

Result: Yes, generally next day.

- 6.1.2 Have appropriate access to professional medical people.

Result: Yes, being done.

- 6.1.3 Have all Medical Officers made aware of the necessity to keep files updated.

Result: Yes, doing same.

## **7. Facility Management**

### **Target 7.1 Manage the agreed maintenance budget for the institution.**

7.1.1 Keep regular checks on budget.

Result: Yes, being done.

7.1.2 Identify essential maintenance projects.

Result: Yes, done.

7.1.3 Agree 2005 budget with the Director of Finance.

Result: Yes, done.

### **Target 7.4 Ensure Safety Statement in place and updated as necessary, backed by effective Health & Safety procedures and practices.**

7.4.1 Bring Health & Safety statement up to date.

Result: Yes, done.

7.4.2 Ensure that statement is available to all staff.

Result: Yes, available.

7.4.3 Hold regular meetings to discuss statement.

Result: Yes, meetings held.

### **Target 7.5 Establish arrangements to review and implement, where practicable, recommendations of the Inspector of Prisons & Places of Detention.**

7.5.1 Review report and identify relevant recommendations.

Result: Not applicable. (No inspection in 2004)

7.5.2 Set up working group to implement recommendation if necessary.

Result: Not applicable (no inspection in 2004).

## **8. Tobacco Control**

### **Target 8.1 Implement new tobacco control regulations as necessary within the service.**

8.1.1 Agree and introduce policy on smoking with I.P.S. Headquarters.

Result: Not done.

8.1.2 Educate staff and offenders on policy.

Result: Not implemented.

## **9. Environmental & Waste Management**

### **Target 9.1 Set up system to improve environmental and waste management in line with I.P.S. Environmental Policy Statement.**

9.1.1 Awareness training for all staff.

Result: Has not happened.

9.1.2 Set up monthly meetings until full introduction of the policy.

Result: Not done.

9.1.3 Review overall policy.

Result: Not done.

### **Viewing/inspecting aspects within the business plans for year ending 2004.**

(A) New financial management systems

Comments - not on original system / old system in operation.

(B) Recording of assaults

Comments - now on computer/no assaults to record.

- (C) New working roster  
Comments - due to commence on 12/11/2005.
- (D) Evidence re emergency-plan tests carried out  
Comments - very limited in 2004.
- (E) Records re staff training updated  
Comments - almost no staff training in 2004.
- (F) Offenders on reception, procedures explained to them re services available to them  
Comments - booklet issued and information form on H&S.
- (G) Health & Safety statement available to all staff  
Comments - yes, in C.O.'s office.
- (H) Records re breach of policy in maintaining a drug-free centre  
Comments - informed on parade. No written policy.
- (I) Identify the essential maintenance and look at work completed/uncompleted  
Comments - centre was designated as going to close. Very little maintenance work done in 2004 as a result of its pending closure. (breakages only)

## 5. Statistical Information

### 5.1 Sentence Profile of Prisoners

Number serving sentences of up to and including 6 months	05
Number serving sentences over 6 months and including 12 months	02
Number serving sentences over 12 months and including 2 years	14
Number serving sentences over 2 years and up to and including 4 years	16

Number serving sentences over 4 years and up to and including 7 years		05
Number serving sentences over 7 years and up to and including 10 years		Nil
Number serving sentences over 10 years		Nil
Number serving life sentences		<u>03</u>
	Total	45

## 5.2 Age Profile of the Prisoners within the centre

Number aged 16,17,18 years old		Nil
Number aged 19, 20, 21 years old		02
Number aged 22,23,24,25 years old		09
Number aged 26 - 30 years old		08
Number aged 31 - 35 years old		05
Number aged 36 - 40 years old		08
Number aged 41 - 45 years old		03
Number aged 46 - 50 years old		06
Number aged 51 - 60 years old		03
Number aged 61 years and older		<u>01</u>
	Total	45

## 5.3 Staffing Profile

Governor Grade 3		01
Assistant Governor		01
Chief Officer Grade 2		01
Chief Trades Officer		01
Clerk Grade I		01
Assistant Chief Officers		05
Clerk Grade II (1 job sharing)		03
Trades Officers		04
Prison Officers (1 job sharing)		<u>19</u>

	Total	36
5.4	<i>Other Staff</i>	
	Doctors (part-time)	02
	Chaplain (1 full-time R.C. nun + visiting priest) (+ other denominations called when required)	01
	Probation and Welfare Officer (part-time)	01
	Teachers (3 full-time + 9 part-time)	03
	Optician (1 available on call when needed)	-
	No Psychologist	-
	No Psychiatrist	-
	Total	7

## 6. Meeting with Various Groups/Individuals

### 6.1 Meeting with Chaplain

The Chaplain is a member of the religious congregation of the Sacred Heart. I had been urged by my sister who is a nun in the same congregation to be certain to meet her. Of course, it was always intended, as in all prisons, to give time to the chaplain. She told me she commences work at 9 to 9.30-ish and is there until 4pm. She sees herself as being available as a 'granny' person. She is a confessor figure. In her opinion, morale in the centre is very, very low. She felt that the selection process for sending people to Shelton Abbey is very questionable. Certainly it seems outrageous to send two offenders for the last two days of their sentence. Obviously it was some relief to an overcrowded prison but was cruel on the offenders and totally

unfair to the staff of Shelton Abbey. She felt the centre should be more therapeutic.

The parish priest of Avoca, who is a former prison chaplain, says Mass every Sunday. The sister thinks it is unfortunate that there are no Samaritans attached to or available to the offenders. She has organised prayer meetings particularly to commemorate someone who has died. These are partly spiritual readings and partly music. They have been quite successful and she gets a reasonable attendance at such ceremonies from people of different religions and of none. She is happy with the accommodation provided. She is apparently a very musical person and is involved in organising many impromptu religious services.

## 6.2 *Meeting with the POA*

This meeting was a very relaxed one. Understandably they expressed great concern about the gloom which had pervaded the centre in the last few years and the great uncertainty as to their future. However, they were optimistic now in view of some of the recent utterances of the Minister. They agreed that it was an advantage to have the farm restored to the centre. It had been leased for one year to a local farmer. On the whole the POA did not seem to have any serious gripes with management either locally or in HQ but felt the implementation of the present agreement might well produce problems.

However, I pointed out that the Inspectorate is concerned only with conditions at the time of the inspection. They complained that they were 6.5 staff down

and stated that there were two long-term sickness members. They felt that there could be more teaching of computers. There was only one teacher of that subject. Also, that there should be more woodwork.

- 6.3 They said that the library has been closed for some time. The room in which it was located was converted into an additional bedroom. Alternative arrangements need to be put in place without delay. A new school is required.

The future of Shelton has now been assured following a period of uncertainty as to whether it would remain open. This uncertainty affected morale within the centre.

#### 6.4 *Meeting with Doctors*

Drs Siobhan McCabe and Nick Buggle were seen by the Inspector and Dr. Ledwith on October 12th, 2005.

They informed us that the prison officers had been very upset by the threatened closure of the centre on two occasions.

They were both of the opinion that a psychologist was essential and they also felt that there was an urgent need for counsellors. Most offenders they informed us have a history of addiction. There are A.A. meetings in Arklow but only one offender (a lifer) goes to them.



There is a N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous ) group in Arklow that meets twice a week but they said offenders are not allowed to go. The doctors attend from 9 to 11 am daily and seven to twelve offenders are seen usually.

Committals have full physical but they go to the doctor's practice for blood tests (why I was not sure). All offenders have come from other prisons.

Random urine samples are taken under supervision.

The doctors do not feel that drug abuse is a major problem in the centre but offenders are returned to their previous prison if they are found taking drugs.

They, the doctors, agreed that the examination room is not adequate.

The examination couch is up against a wall and under it (this was not mentioned by the doctors) are a number of boxes with files of discharged offenders.

Basic medication is kept in the surgery.

The doctors were of the opinion that obtaining medication on prescription was not a problem. [but see the medical orderlies' report]

It is taking time to come to terms with the new computer system. We were also told it is very slow.

The doctors felt that the majority of the offenders were all physically well young men and that their medical problems were minimal.

Offenders who were off drugs would, they felt, go back on them upon their discharge.

Some offenders are being taught to drive.

They are not taught trades.

They receive health talks on a regular basis concerning all aspects of health.

The Head Teacher employs people from “outside” to talk to them about health matters as well.

The doctors told us they enjoyed coming to the centre and felt they were doing good there.

There was no problem, they told us, about prescriptions and no problem about getting medication at weekends.

Methadone users were not sent there and they did not use methadone.

Sleeping tablets were not used and Valium was used only for acute anxiety.

Most of the offenders were young men in their twenties.

They rarely needed the services of a psychiatrist and they did not seem to have any problem with having offenders admitted to the C.M.H.

They did not like the idea of a nurse on their team without prison officer training.

They would like an A.E.D. (a defibrillator ).

There was no padded cell. Offenders in need of one are returned to their previous prison instead.

They would like another medical orderly.

It is two miles to Arklow and ten miles to Wicklow town.

They did not mention the anomaly in the practice of obtaining medication on prescription nor did they seem to know that the same cup was used for all offenders taking medication by mouth.

They were both very pleasant and they did not seem to us to be any way defensive.

#### 6.4(A) *Medical Orderly*

The acting Medical Orderly was seen in lieu of the regular Medical Orderly by the Inspector and Dr. Ledwith on October 12th, 2005.

We were informed that the Medical Orderly is on duty from 8 am to 5 pm seven days a week. His routine on arriving is to put on the computer the list of offenders to be seen by the doctors. He then takes urine samples which are sent to an outside laboratory for drug testing.

At 9 am medication is given out in “dry” form. As mentioned above there is only one cup for all the offenders when taking medication.

There are about eleven offenders on medication, mostly “hot” medication, diabetic and antibiotic.

New offenders are tested (their urine) for drugs and alcohol about a week after admission and if they are not “clean” they are sent back to their original prison.

The medical orderly did agree that the doctors’ room was too small and showed past medical files under the examination couch. Current offenders’ files are kept in a regular filing cabinet. The key to the surgery when it is not in use is in the A.C.O.’s Office.

Regarding medication on prescriptions, when the doctor prescribes medication the chemist in Wicklow town is informed. The chemist comes to the centre and collects the prescription and returns to the pharmacy to dispense same. The chemist then returns to the centre with the medicine. However, in an emergency they were apparently able to use a chemist in Arklow (two miles away).

The Medical Orderly also runs the tuck shop four days a week from 11.30 am to 1.30 pm. There is no library at present but one is apparently planned.

Offenders on average stay there about twelve months.

They are not locked into the rooms at night and have access to toilets outside their room.

There are tv sets in all bedrooms and he thought the tv was switched off at midnight.

I notice that there were outside bars on the windows of the clinic room.

In general the medical orderly would like:

1. A bigger surgery,
2. A filing cabinet for old files,
3. Individual disposable containers to aid the offenders taking medication instead of one cup for all.

They apparently use the general hospital in Loughlinstown for medical admissions.

#### *6.4(B) Visit to the surgery*

While the surgery is bright, it is far too small. Files should be stored safely elsewhere under lock and key. Certainly the idea of one glass only being available for all the offenders to sip or take tablets is unhygienic. The surgery should be provided with paper cups or some such disposable receptacles.

#### *6.5 Meeting with Welfare Officer*

The Welfare Officer operates from the Arklow office of the Probation Service, where her administrative/secretarial support is located. She has completed a three-year placement in Shelton but expressed a wish to remain there for a longer period. Is it possible to persuade the probation service headquarters to relax its policy of not allowing welfare officers to remain in a prison for more than three years? Surely a case-by-case approach rather than a blanket rule would be appropriate?

The Welfare Officer identified a number of recurring problems amongst the centre's population. Firstly, many offenders remain in Shelton for a short period: six to eight weeks has been mentioned as typical. It is important to observe that the latter figure is impressionistic and should be checked against the centre's records. Nevertheless, the quick "turn-around" is said to make it difficult to run the various programmes that should feature in this centre.

Secondly, many offenders have addiction problems. Alcoholics Anonymous comes into the centre once a week (on Thursday evenings). It was reported by the Welfare Officer that some offenders expressed fears that the AA meetings lacked confidentiality and in exceptional cases offenders have been allowed to attend AA meetings in Arklow, in order to maintain a degree of privacy. Narcotics Anonymous is expected to return to Shelton soon: Garda security clearance of those facilitating the service is awaited.

And thirdly, homelessness, which is described as being “a real problem”. Offenders without an address are not in a position to avail of temporary release or an array of post-release services. Aftercare services are also seen as lacking. In particular it was suggested that there is a dearth of “half-way houses”, sheltered accommodation and the like. With regard to the provision of accommodation, some local authorities were reported to be very supportive of recently released offenders while others are less so. The Welfare Officer makes referrals to linkage services (especially in particular parts of Dublin) but the “Connect” Programme was said to be unavailable.

The Welfare Officer suggested a number of improvements. One is to provide a proper professional consulting suite that assures privacy and confidentiality. At present such consultations take place in the Welfare Officer’s office in circumstances that are not conducive to ensuring privacy. The office door has a window in it and is located next to the area where offenders collect their meals. On checking with management regarding this problem we were informed that a room is available for such consultation at the rear of the main building and it is fully private. Why the Welfare Officer is not using this room for meetings is a mystery to management. Second, the visiting room was stated to be “not child-friendly”. While books are provided for children there were no toys or a dedicated play area; moreover, the baby-changing facility is located in the visitors’ toilet. The Welfare Officer also suggested that the Society of Vincent de Paul should be invited into the centre to provide an

additional support to offenders and their families. Lastly, the need for a new school was stressed.

#### 6.6 *Meeting with Head Teacher*

The Head Teacher echoed the observations of the Welfare Officer concerning the length of time offenders stay in Shelton Abbey. Given the short duration of most offenders' time in the centre it was difficult to plan and provide relevant courses. The teaching service endeavours to provide a range of courses. The current offerings include history, French, ECDL, CAD (computer-aided design), woodwork, addiction-awareness, life skills, personal development and a variety of FETAC courses. The latter were said to be the appropriate education pathway as they are integrated into the adult education system. There are two assessment periods during the year and a wider selection of courses. Moreover, incremental programmes that can be continued and completed after release are particularly valuable. Driving courses (both theory and practical) are also available and offenders may be allowed to take the driving test in Gorey.

Offenders taking computer courses do not have access to the Internet, a state of affairs that pertains throughout the prison system. At this stage there is a compelling case for allowing limited (and duly supervised) access to the Internet, particularly as an educational resource. I suggest that access should be provided on a trial basis. Shelton is an ideal centre to run such a trial.

Drama classes are not currently available. In the past, attempts have been made to run drama courses but insurmountable difficulties have been presented by the short-term nature of offenders' stays in Shelton. Where appropriate, music was taught on a one-to-one basis. However, there is presently no music teacher. A local musical society gave a concert recently which was a great success. Two offenders play guitars and they say there is a need for a teacher, as do other offenders and staff.

The Head Teacher suggested a number of improvements. A new school building is needed. Currently classes take place in prefabs and there is no facility for science or home economics. [I understand that some cookery courses are offered in the centre's kitchen but of necessity classes are restricted to times when the kitchen is not in use.] The gym is also located in a prefab which is unsuitable.

There is said to be a perception amongst offenders that they are better placed for early release if they are working rather than availing of the educational programme. If the perception corresponds with reality a change in practice is necessary so that offenders attending classes are no worse off than those who opt for work. On the other hand, if the perception is inaccurate offenders should be made aware in clear and unambiguous terms that they will not lose out because they pursue educational opportunities. The Inspector discussed the idea of mentoring, i.e. the teaching of offenders by other offenders. One offender admitted that he helped other offenders



write letters, prepare half sheets, or fill out forms in other prisons but that he was refused permission at this centre to do same by the teachers. He said that the teachers stated "any teaching that will be done here will be done by the teachers only". The Inspector has already dealt with this situation in the private prison he visited in England. It does not cost the administration an extra cent. However, it is good for an offender to be a teacher; it helps his self esteem and it also helps the pupil. However, I am also advised it can present problems in the inappropriate development of particular friendships. That can happen certainly in a prison particularly in an open-centre environment. However, it could be avoided by insisting that the teacher has two pupils at the one time or that two teachers deal with one pupil at the same time.

The inspector then made a visit into the classrooms. They are mainly contained in Terrapin huts placed behind "the Nunnery". They are all too small. If as I hope the place is expanded and numbers increased, there will have to be a radical replacement of suitable classrooms and a gym. I visited the woodwork shop where one offender was making a fine lamp stand and another was making a frame for a painting. The teacher has a good working relationship with the offenders. Then I visited the arts and crafts room. Recently there was an exhibition here of much of the work produced and there were photographs of it. It was most impressive. One offender was doing a large painting of three aspects of a bird, another one was doing a poster advertising Liverpool and told me that under no circumstances would

he do one for Everton! I then visited the Head Teacher's room. It is rather narrow but she assures me it is adequate.

I then attended a history class. It is a subject which has always fascinated me and in which I have got a first-class honours degree. However, the teacher was mesmeric. With the aid of slides he was lecturing on a cartoonist who died 200 years ago but the slides showed various scenes connected with 1798 but not merely in Ireland but also relating to France such as Napoleon's rise. It was quite clear that offenders were fascinated and very attentive. I was so taken by his teaching that I had to be prised out of the classroom to continue my inspection. He is a local historian as well. He told me that the building known as the Nunnery was so called because in Victorian times an Earl of Wicklow had a large number of daughters. He wanted to put them away from the main house as presumably they were getting on his nerves, so he built this wing at the back of the mansion and it has always been called the Nunnery. It is also alleged to be haunted. By a strange coincidence a niece of the late Countess of Wicklow (the late Eleanor Butler) called unannounced but unfortunately the teacher had gone home. Normally he has four pupils but there were three pupils when I called. It was incredible to see three offenders concentrating with enthusiasm on what was a slightly esoteric subject. He normally is confined to four pupils and has no problem filling up his class. However, all the teachers were obviously dedicated and all presented a very good relationship with their pupils.

## 6.7 *Meeting with "Heads of Service"*

The clerk in charge said that at present he has two full-time clerks and one clerk who is job-sharing in the stores. He is almost certain that he will be losing one of the full-time clerks. This reorganisation, which may be difficult, will take place during the next few months. It is hoped that the forthcoming new organisational changes will be a success. He has a computer which is working effectively and deals with a wide variety of matters. He is working flat out daily. He feels confident that he can deal with all the problems presented, however he feels there are problems down the road. Particularly with the reduction in his staff, he will be vulnerable, e.g. if there are staff on leave or sick, there are no relief arrangements or assistance for such. He is hoping to sort out the problems when instructions come down from H.Q. and that he will be able to cope.

The person in charge of the garden said he had come from Shanganagh where he trained the youths in horticulture and in fact they provided most of the flowers for the prisons. He felt it was useful training in rehabilitation. Some of his offenders got jobs as trained gardeners when they left. He is highly trained and well motivated. He has achieved a third-level qualification in training and education from U.C.G. He feels there is great potential in the large grounds of Shelton Abbey. The offenders can be taught the art of propagation from seeds and the growing of shrubs, flowers and vegetables. Nowadays shrubs are very expensive in shops. They could easily be produced and be profit-making in Shelton Abbey. However, he feels it will not

happen in his time. He is also very proud of the fact that they maintain and service their machines. He says that he has put his heart into gardening. He is very disappointed that his abilities and qualifications are not more fully recognised and that the new reorganisational changes do not allow him to continue in charge of the garden. The garden is not utilised to its full potential. He feels cereal crops such as barley could be grown. The grounds are in fact a botanic treasure because there are some wonderful exotic shrubs from Australia, Chile and Sri Lanka. They are making their own compost but he feels they could produce even more and perhaps even sell some. A great deal of refuse was contracted to be taken away; however with recycling and composting this bill has now been substantially reduced.

The Chief Officer, now acting assistant Governor, told us she started in the service on Spike Island, transferred to Cork Prison and on promotion was transferred back to Spike Island. She was promoted to Chief Officer and transferred to Shelton Abbey about two years ago. She is a very impressive officer. She seems to have a very burdensome job and the Inspector was pleased to note she will be getting the assistance of a Detail Officer and hopefully this will be sooner rather than later. The clocking-in system has gone "live" and the cheques are made out accordingly from the Finance Section in Killarney. It is working very well without many errors. If there is an error it can easily be checked and ascertained. It is possible for a query to come back from Killarney through the Clerk grade I and back to the ledger of the Chief Officer.

Every offender is given a job which he is trusted to do. All found that offenders reacted favourably if given responsibility. They also reacted in a very favourable manner if specifically praised. A relaxed attitude permeates the centre. No officers wear uniforms. All are on first-name terms and offenders address officers by their first names but similarly the officers respect the offenders by using their first name. There is a mutual respect between staff and offender.

They felt there should be more structure for people facing release. They should take only offenders who have at least six to eight months to serve before release if they are to provide any sort of support and training. There is no "Connect" Project in the centre. The centre should be used as a reward towards the end of a sentence rather than being selected at random. Shelton Abbey should be seen as a reward.

Every month there is a review meeting when a number of offenders' sentences are reviewed. It is a policy to tell the offender how he fared before the review board. Their sentence management and progress is understood and shared by the staff with the offenders.

A grievance was raised in relation to the loss of allowances particularly during the last three years of service when such are calculated for pension purposes. On paper their grades were similar and also their salary but there

was inequality of pension due to loss of allowances by some grades who were prevented from working unsocial hours and these hours qualify for the pensionable allowance payments.

#### 6.8 *Meeting with the visiting committee.*

The Inspector and Dr. Ledwith met seven members of the visiting committee. They were clearly very committed, dedicated members who took a lively interest in the institution. The committee were full of praise for the management and offenders in their care. However, they felt (as does the Inspector) that Shelton Abbey has fantastic potential. They do not have any padded cells, isolation or strip cells. If any offender is out of line they can be sent back to the centre they came from. That threat is sufficient sanction. They were full of praise for the school and teachers. They agreed that the morale in the centre had been very bad for the last two years due to the uncertainty of the future of the institution. They believed it was drug-free although they stated that you could not be absolutely certain that no drugs got into the place. However, there was random urine testing. Many of the activities which they had praised in their previous report such as hill walking with prison officers and outings with the Chaplain had been suspended and some of them have not been revived due to staffing problems. They were concerned about the large turnover of offenders. They felt it put an intolerable burden on the educational staff who had to devise suitable and stable programmes particularly for short-term offenders. They pointed out that Shelton Abbey was originally intended for long-term offenders in the last

year or two of their sentence. They would have definite programmes set up for them. They felt it would be good to have that process reinstated.

Concern was expressed about criminal bosses who were able to run their empires while incarcerated. This meant persons working in the institution could be targeted.

#### 6.9 *Visit to the kitchen*

Dr. Ledwith and the Inspector also visited the kitchen which has won a number of awards and is spotlessly clean. However, the chef pointed out that both his fridge and his cold room were too small for an institution of this size and particularly if the strong rumour that it was going to be doubled in capacity came to fruition. He also said it was wonderful in the old days to get fresh vegetables delivered straight from the garden. He expressed the hope, now that the lease to a local farmer had expired, that the garden would be restored. At one time the garden produced all the flowers necessary for the entire prison system, save Loughlin House. They also provided this institution with fresh vegetables including potatoes. All present agreed that fresh vegetables provided daily directly from the garden to the kitchen had more taste and were in many ways very superior to their dried or frozen cousins. On the first day of the visitation an excellent lunch was provided. However, the Inspector ascertained it was not what the offenders were getting and he asked that for the rest of the visitation they get a sample of the same meal as the offenders. They follow the twenty-eight-day menu cycle laid down for all the prisons. However, one day when it should have been beef stroganoff we

were presented with sweet and sour pork. This was because the offenders did not like beef stroganoff and preferred the pork dishes. The food sampled was excellent and was piping hot.

Certainly this facility should be expanded; the farm should be used sensibly as should the gardens. Indeed there should be a certification course provided to enable gardeners to get work on release.

#### 6.10 *Meeting with Individuals*

The Inspectorate met a number of offenders individually as well as an officer who had requested to see the Inspectorate. These are the collective views of the entire group of individuals.

There were no complaints as to the management of the centre. The question of an offender helping another offender to read or write was raised but they felt it was not encouraged in this centre by the teachers. In fact the response was “any teaching done here will be done by the teachers only and nobody else”. The invasion of an offender’s privacy and the length that some of the press photographers go to capture a photograph was outlined. They all said that they did not witness any racism within the centre. There were complaints concerning the lack of work for offenders especially in the winter time when there was very little to do in the garden and no grass cutting of lawns or trimming of pathways available. Some spoke of seeking employment locally and going in and out every day to same, which would also give them an opportunity to earn some extra cash on release. Some felt it was unfair (and



amounted to inequality) how the remission was calculated; some got quarter remission, others half, while others (lifers) got none. They stated that it all depended on the crime and the policy of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

The officer outlined the terrible time at this centre over the past three years regarding its threatened closure plus very low morale and high sick leave among the staff as a result. He felt good staff resigned or retired early as they could not stick the uncertainty. He hoped the new agreement with the union would improve the situation and that the centre would grow and prosper as a result. He felt the centre could and would be an example to the rest of the service and that there was now new hope and confidence in the place.

The officer felt a better method of selecting offenders for the centre must be found and a vetting process should be put in place. There should also be an area or a section for the long-term offenders and the main focus of rehabilitation energised towards them. He raised the question of those who abscond and must be returned to the centre when apprehended by the Gardai. He felt the law should be changed so that they could be returned by the Gardai to their original prison rather than coming to an open centre. He outlined the costs involved in bringing staff back on overtime to transfer the absconder back to prison and this could happen late at night when there was a major difficulty in finding staff to do the escort. He was asked as to why a secure room was not available here to hold the absconder until such time as

staff were available to do the escort, to which he replied that it is not the ethos of an open centre to have secure holding rooms. (Management confirms that as of this date this practice no longer exists.)

#### 6.11 *General Information Booklet*

A useful booklet of general information is provided to each offender. It is inaccurate in stating that the visiting committee has the power to award certain privileges and to impose punishment. These powers are effectively gone by the 1997 Act which was to bring in an appeal mechanism on decisions of the Governor in accordance with rules, which have yet not seen the light of day! There is no real appeal system available to prisoners here or elsewhere in the system within the Republic of Ireland, (unlike Northern Ireland).

The following occurs in the booklet! “no smoking areas” are the staff quarters [i.e. the Nunnery], the school, the library, the classrooms, the gym, the dining hall, the surgery, the kitchen and bedrooms.

### **7. Tour of Inspection**

7.1 Shelton Abbey is situated in Shelton Wood and surrounded by trees. The front of the building has a gravel area for parking and just beyond the gravel area is a nine-hole pitch-and-putt course. A wire fence approximately six feet high surrounds the buildings, the garden, the football field and tennis court. There are prefab buildings plus containers at the rear of the main building but

these are not visible from the entrance or from the front of the main building. The ground-floor entrance leads through a reception room with large open fireplace and from there into the main entrance hall. This entrance hall has a table and chair with stairs leading up to the first floor and a corridor running both left and right off the main hall. Offenders' visitors present themselves at the main entrance hall where particulars are recorded re whom they are visiting, their ID, and examination of any parcels or gifts (no bottles or food allowed) they may have brought for the offender they are visiting. They are then directed to the visiting room or visiting area. The floors of the reception area, hallway and corridors are highly polished, very clean and the walls are freshly painted. It is a most pleasant entrance to an institution. The corridor to the right of the reception area leads past the location of two telephones for offenders' use. They can make calls but cannot receive them. There is a facility that offenders can purchase a call card in the tuck shop and there are no restrictions as to whom they can telephone. There is no monitoring of telephone calls but the telephones can be turned off from a central control point. If an offender has no money to purchase a telephone card he is generally facilitated with a call from the office phone free of charge. There is no designated telephone to the Samaritans.

Further down the corridor is the dining room which has 16 tables with three/four chairs to each table. It is a large room with lino covering on the floor. It was clean and tidy at time of inspection. There is a row of large windows along one side resulting in its being very bright and cheerful. At the

end of the room there is a milk dispenser, salt, pepper, sauces, etc. on shelves and a free-standing stainless-steel holder for trays, cutlery, delph, etc. to be placed there after meal use.

Outside the door of the dining room is the servery area. The food is cooked in the kitchen and placed in a hot bain-marie, which is wheeled into the servery and plugged into the sockets provided. The meals are “plated” and served from there. The offenders can request from those serving out the meals the amount they want and also their choice. The floor of the servery area is tiled while the walls are covered halfway up with white rock material. The area was clean and well maintained but it is just an open area on a corridor, which is not very suitable for the serving of food. There is a “wash up” room adjacent to the servery area which is no longer being used for that purpose, and management are considering changing it into office use, perhaps for the Chief Officer.

Further on the corridor is the Probation and Welfare Officer’s office. It has a glass window in the upper part of the door which allows vision into the office and one can observe those within from the corridor.

Next to the Welfare Officer’s office is the staffroom which has a table and chairs, microwave oven, kettle, lockers, etc. and it is used by the staff on night duty as well as those on breaks from duty. It was clean and tidy.

The corridor continues with an offenders' locker room for those offenders engaged in kitchen work. There is a washroom off the locker room with wash-hand basin and toilet. The floors of both areas were tiled and both rooms were clean and well maintained.

The opposite end of the corridor contains the Governor's Office, the General Office, Medical Officer's room/surgery and the corridor leads on to the communal tv room and the visiting hall.

## 7.2 *Kitchen*

The kitchen is managed by one cook officer and three offenders. The cook officer works back to back with another cook officer and this gives continuity of service. The floor of the kitchen is tiled while the walls are covered in white rock material. The kitchen has achieved the hygiene award and the "Q" mark from Excellence Ireland for the past number of years. The Health Authority officials have carried out a number of unannounced inspections and have forwarded very favourable reports on each occasion.

The kitchen is designed in an "L" shape with the cookers, stainless-steel storage presses, sinks, etc. around the walls and a free centre of floor space. The main equipment within the kitchen consists of two convention ovens, two 6-ring cookers, bratt pan, deep-fat fryer, burker boiler, mixer, milk dispenser, microwave oven and bain-marie.

Just off the kitchen is a washroom with a tiled floor and the walls covered in white rock material. There are stainless-steel sinks, shelving, pots/pans shelving, power wash, dishwasher, etc. contained within, and the entire area was very clean.

There are a number of storage areas off the other side of the kitchen including cold room, freezer room, “dry stores,” fridges, etc. There are also wash-hand basins. All the floors of these areas were tiled while the walls were covered in white rock. They were all clean, neat and tidy. The officer in charge stated that he was satisfied with the equipment and facilities such as storage space, presses, colds rooms, etc provided.

The vegetables are delivered already prepared and the meat is generally delivered twice weekly. In the new agreement “organisational change in the Prison Service”, it is proposed to replace the two existing cook officers with two assistant industrial supervisors. It appears to be a well managed kitchen, the meals were well presented and tasty. They operate the national 28-day-menu cycle.

### 7.3 *ACO's Office*

This office is open 24 hours per day and managed by an ACO. The Chief Officer also uses it quite frequently and it is the “hub” of the institution. The walkie-talkie radios are operated from this point and the duties roster is made

out from here. The alarm and security control panels are within the office. The first-aid items are contained there, as are the records of visits. It is fitted with a computer and printer and various small safes or presses with keys for the various areas and bedrooms within the centre. Records regarding staff clocking-in and clocking-out plus other records re overtime, staff sick, etc. are all contained there. It was clean and tidy as far as an operational office can be. It had a counter across the front and all the requests/queries, etc. dealt with from there.

The corridor continues with a cleaning storage facility just off it which contains buckets, mops, polish, cleaning materials, brushes, vacuum cleaner, polisher, buffer, etc.

Another small corridor off the main corridor contains offenders' and visitors' toilets and wash-hand basins. They were clean, tidy and well kept with the walls tiled halfway up.

Further on the main corridor a room was in the process of being renovated for use as a library. Shelving was being erected. This work is being done under the guidance of Arklow Library staff. There is another small room off the library which is intended to be used as a computer room but no computers have been installed there as yet.

There is a large snooker hall further on the corridor which contains a full-sized snooker table while at the other end the room contains a pool table and a darts board. This is a fine games room with the floor highly polished and shining. It has a large open fireplace with mantel and a large mirror over the mantel. It was very clean and tidy.

The visiting hall was next on the corridor which is an extremely large room with small coffee tables and chairs throughout. The ceiling is extremely ornate and has two large chandeliers. There is a tea/coffee-making facility at the end of the room to which visitors have access. There is a row of large windows on one side of the hall which allows in plenty of light and makes the room bright and cheerful. There is an open fireplace with large mirror over the mantel and the floor is well polished, and the room is a clean and very pleasant area for visits.

Next to the visiting hall is a communal television room which the offenders use when a football match or other such interesting programmes are on tv. It is quite large and has armchairs placed around it. It also has a very ornate ceiling, plus a large open fireplace with a large mirror over the mantel. The floor is covered in lino and polished to a high standard. It is a neat, tidy, clean room with a relaxing atmosphere. The staff stated that they encourage the offenders to watch football or other such programmes that are of interest to them within this room to enhance communal living as the staff found that since



the installation of television sets in the offenders' bedrooms, they were inclined to watch programmes there alone rather than together in the tv room.

#### 7.4 *Bedrooms (offenders)*

The bedrooms are on the second floor and are on various corridors. They consist of two single bedrooms which are occupied by two life-sentenced offenders. The remaining bedrooms hold 4, 5, 6, or 7 offenders per room and all of them have the same facilities, i.e. single bed, locker, wardrobe, tv, noticeboard over each bedhead, electric kettle, etc. The floor coverings vary a little with carpet tiles on some, lino on others, while some have polished floorboards. The bedrooms are in the process of being repainted and different colours are being used; prior to this they were all painted the same colour. The bedrooms were maintained to an acceptable level of hygiene and tidiness, some better than others; some with beds made up while others were as the offenders had left them on getting up. Some of the noticeboards over the head of the beds had paper cuttings, photographs, posters, etc. while others were quite bare.

On the back corridor of the bedrooms area there is a sanitary facility which has a sluice basin, urinals, five toilets and wash-hand basins. The walls are tiled and the floor covered in terrazzo material. The entire area was clean and very presentable.

The RC Chaplain's office is at the end of one of the bedroom corridors. It appears to be quite a large office.

#### 7.5 *Offices and stores*

The general office/personnel office is located off the main entrance corridor while the stores offices are located in a prefab at the rear of the main building. The Clerk Grade One is responsible for both the general/personnel office and the stores. He has three Clerk Grade Two's working to him, one of whom is job sharing but not job sharing with any person within Shelton Abbey.

The general office/personnel office deals with all of the offenders' files, requests, cash, gratuity, applications, appointments, court appearances, temporary releases, etc. The personnel section deals with all staff matters, files, transfers, applications, records re sick leave, etc. They operate with computer assistance and state that the computer programme is quite good. They experience the same difficulties as other prisons in that when an offender returns late off temporary release and is not recorded on computer on the day of their return their discharge date may not be accurate when recorded as returning the previous day. This record has to be checked manually to ensure its correctness. However, they state that this is not a major problem as a lot of the offenders there are on various sentence remission dates, some on half, others on quarter, others serving life sentences, so a manual check has to be carried out regularly.

The stores section is scattered between various prefabs or steel containers all situated in a tarmacadamed area at the rear of the main building. They cater for the victualling requirements of the centre plus all of the stock, articles and maintenance needs of the institution. They also deal with staff footwear, rainwear, protective clothing, etc. as well as the clothing and bedding needs of the offenders.

The offices are fitted with computers but not all of the stock is recorded on computer as the "bin/stock" cards are still manually operated. The various containers hold offenders' duvets, bedding equipment, mattresses, etc. while another one contains toilet paper, towel rolls, safety shoes, offenders' clothing, etc. Another one holds cleaning materials, cleaning equipment, delph, cutlery, office stationery, file covers, while another holds building maintenance needs such as timber, paint, sanitary fittings, roof felt, plumbing and electrical requirements.

The offices and stores were neat and tidy and were busy offices with computers operating, telephones ringing, etc. throughout our visit. The fact that the stores are so scattered in various containers and without proper shelving, makes their work that much more difficult. The entire offices are quite small for the numbers working in them and the centre is in need of a proper administration block with suitable storage facilities provided.

*The Nunnery section*

In the area of the main building known as the Nunnery is located the staff's computer training room, which the Inspectorate was kindly granted the use of for the duration of their visit. It has three office desks with computers and a filing cabinet. It is a fine training room for the small number of staff receiving training at any one time. It was a comfortable room for the Inspector's work.

There is also a POA Office on the corridor and, on a corridor off it, there is a staff changing/locker room. There is a washroom off the corridor which contains two showers, two toilets and four wash-hand basins. All of these were hygienically clean.

The top floor of the Nunnery contains the boardroom which has a large boardroom table plus 12 chairs. It also contains sideboards and has a tea/coffee-making facility. It is carpeted and again a quite comfortable, well maintained, neat and tidy room.

There is also a Chief Officer's office on this floor which is quite large with a desk, computer, filing cabinet, etc. It was also well maintained, clean and tidy.

The end of the corridor contained another washroom which had two toilets, two showers, plus four wash-hand basins. These were all clean and tidy.

## 7.6 *Laundry*

The laundry is operated by an officer and one offender. It operates Monday to Friday and meets the laundry needs of the entire institution. They have three washing and three drying machines. They manually input the washing powder into the washing machines, not like some of the other prisons where such is done automatically. The offenders are issued with a numbered laundry bag at committal and the same bag is used for their laundry wash throughout their stay. Each item of clothing plus their sheets, pillow covers, towels, etc. is given an individual number, so the laundry officer can check off each laundry bag with the individual's stamped number on each item.

The floor of the laundry room was tiled as well as tiles halfway up the walls. The area was clean and tidy with the machines in full use at time of inspection.

#### *7.7 Reception areas*

The reception areas are open (part-time) Monday to Friday. The reception is quite small with a counter across at the entrance door and fitted with a computer which is not in operation. The records are kept manually. The particulars of the committals are taken re height, weight, marks, scars, clothing, property, etc. and they are issued with an information booklet. The committals are not searched or showered within the reception. They are given a snapshot of the institution's fire plans, a walk around the building outlining the various areas and facilities plus having pointed out the fire emergency exits, plus the evacuation/assembly points. They are given

instructions re the policy of the institution and that it be kept a drug-free centre. They must be agreeable to undergo urine sample tests and then sign a form to that effect plus to the fact that the fire plans/emergency exits, etc. have been explained to them. They are issued with a kit (sheets, towel, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc.) which are numbered (laundry) and then assigned a particular bedroom.

The floor and halfway up the walls of the reception area is tiled and it was clean and tidy. Next door to the reception area is a storage facility for some of the offenders' clothing from the reception; other clothing is stored upstairs within the same building. This area is also used as a distribution point to give out cleaning materials to those responsible for cleaning within the main building. The storage facility is quite sparse. The upstairs area contained lockers for offenders' clothing but it also contained a considerable amount of full black plastic bags with clothing and property within them. On the opposite side of the room there were further piles of full black plastic bags which the officer stated belonged to offenders who had left, absconded or just failed to return for their property. The whole area was quite "higgledy-piggledy" and one could find it difficult to establish what belonged to whom although there were names stuck onto the black plastic bags. Some of the bags appeared to have been there for a considerable time and perhaps a way of their disposal or removal should be undertaken to eliminate the storage problem and tidy the overall area.

## 7.8 *Garden*

The gardens consist of 25 acres which includes a football field, nine-hole pitch-and-putt course and tennis court. It is managed by an officer and 12 offenders although the number of offenders employed there varies according to the seasons or time of year. In summertime the offenders are fully engaged in grass cutting, weeding, flower planting, working in the rose garden, greenhouse work, rockery, etc. but at other times of the year the same amount of work is not available. The officer has a large garage/work store area where he stores all of the garden machinery and also uses this garage to maintain, repair/service the machines and sharpen the blades of the lawn mowers. He has offenders with him in carrying out this work and he gives them the skill and knowledge to be able to do these repairs/servicing on their own. Some offenders have secured employment on release in this type of work in garden centres and golf courses. The gardens are very impressive with a long brick wall on one side of it which has shrubs, flowers, roses, etc attached to it as well as all along its base. It is in a tree setting with a small river running through the centre and a pond with sprinklers and water lilies. There is also a rockery with water flowing over it. The officer pointed out a yew tree there that is alleged to be 800 years old and a tulip tree which is stated to be the second tallest tree in Ireland. There are also other trees of note such as the Australian fern, eucalyptus, blue atlas and cedar. There is another section known as the fan bed area which has small boxwood hedges and flowers planted between the various rows of hedging. The gardens are set out at different levels which allows one to view the overall effect from the

highest point which is very beautiful. They start off growing most of their seeds in the glasshouse then transferring them into trays outside and from there into the various flower beds. They also grow some vegetables, tomatoes and a small number of fruit trees in the glasshouse.

The lawns surrounding the main building as well as the football field, the tennis court and pitch-and-putt course are maintained very well by the garden workers and when in full growth it is a full-time job for a number of the offenders just to keep the grass cut and the walkways trimmed. Even this at time of year it is looking very well.

#### *7.9 The trades staff section/workshops*

The Chief Trades Officer has four Trades Officers working with him and each of them has offenders assigned to work with them. He has a carpenter, an electrician, a plumber and a plasterer/painter. The new agreement “organisational change in the Irish Prison Service” which was finalised recently between the POA and Prison Service HQ outlines that the trades work will be conducted in future by an outside contractor except for a little maintenance work. Consequently the CTO is losing three of his trades staff and will be left only with an electrician. This is giving rise to a certain amount of disquiet among the staff. It will also mean that offenders will no longer have the opportunity to learn trades work from the local trades officers, so it is another section of work for offenders discontinued.



Each of the current trades staff has a small workshop in which they carry out repairs/or make items for use within the institution.

There is a row of buildings at the rear of the main building which contains the power house (ESB supply), the generator house which comes into operation in the event of a power supply failure, and a diesel tank house/boiler which comes into use in the event of a gas supply cut off, (it is gas which is used for the central heating system). There is also a water treatment plant house which is constantly being monitored by an electronic system which gives up-to-date readings re quality and quantity of water supply. The trades staff have to apply chemicals to the various tanks and daily records are kept of this operation. Water analysis tests are carried out twice yearly by a laboratory in Co. Kildare as well as during unannounced visits by staff from the environmental health section of the local authority re water quality. There is a fire engine plant house which stores two main fire engines that are fitted with two jockey pumps. The diesel service tanks are also stored there which are battery operated. Next to this house is the boiler house which supplies the central heating and hot water for the entire centre. There are also two other small plant houses within the area and each of them has computerised readings re various pressures, electrical input/output, etc.

There are two large wells supplying the water requirements for the centre. One of the wells is 270 feet deep while the other is 196 feet deep. (There is also a town water supply to the centre but used only in emergency or when

the well water has to be turned off for maintenance.) There are two very large water storage tanks which hold 66 thousand gallons. They are installed in such a way that there is always a reserve of water within them to allow for fire-hose-reel use in the event of an emergency.

#### 7.10 *Farm and Farmyards*

There are 68 acres of land attached to the centre and last year the land was leased. It was seeded in winter barley and only the stubble is now visible. The officer who operated the farm was tragically killed in an accident about two years ago (the accident happened outside of the Service) and to date he has not been replaced. Apparently the new agreement with the POA outlines a replacement.

The land appears to be of good quality and it is very well serviced with a large number of outhouses, large covered sheds, enclosed yards for animals, a crush to hold animals singly, silage/hay storage area plus other houses to store potatoes, grain, etc. The farmyard is also fitted out with an office, small kitchen, toilets, showers, and a room to have a meal. So the staff and offenders can leave the main building and proceed to the farm for the entire day without having to return for meals, etc. as it is self-sufficient with the kitchen and all of these facilities. The farm appears to be well supplied with tractors, digger, mowers, planter, sprayers, ploughs, etc., which are in storage in one of the locked sheds at present. They also had a cement post/lintels manufacturing section operating in one of the houses which they

used for fencing on the farm. They also cut timber blocks for firewood.

There are a number of fruit trees and a vegetable garden also in one section of the farm.

There is great potential here to give a large number of offenders employment as well as the possibility of supplying a considerable amount of vegetables and fruit to the other institutions. There is also the possibility of erecting plastic tunnels to grow various items throughout the year. The Inspector strongly recommends that this whole area be looked at to establish a staffing structure to allow this farm to be used to its full potential and give offenders work, which is so much needed within this institution.

## **8. Health and Safety**

- 8.1 A meeting took place with the senior staff responsible for health and safety matters relating to the institution as well as meeting the staff's representative health and safety officer.
- 8.2 There is a fire plan for the centre which is updated every two to three years and there are copies of this in the Chief Officer's office as well as in the Chief Trade Officer's office. Drawings of the building are on display in the corridor and other areas which outline the exits, location of hose reels, fire extinguishers, etc. A small booklet is also issued to all staff which again outlines the major aspects of the fire plan and instructions to follow in the case of fire or emergency. The offenders can view the plans on the corridor as well as being given a walk around on committal explaining to them the

various exits, assembly points in the case of an evacuation, etc. The fire plan was last updated on 5th May 2002.

8.3 There is a ring water main supply surrounding all the building and there are eight hydrants fitted to the mains. They have two sources of water supply, i.e. the first is from two wells within the grounds and the second is from the local town's supply. The hydrant locations are clearly marked with an "H" sign and their covers are painted yellow, so they are easily visible. There are no dry or wet risers within the buildings but there are water fire hose reels throughout the institution which can reach the furthest point of occupancy within each section of the buildings. There are water storage tanks fitted for fire-fighting/emergency use which contain 66 thousand gallons and there is a further back-up from the town's supply. There are "jockey pumps" attached to the system which operate by both electrical and battery in the event of a power failure. The water pressure is 7 bar which is compatible with the fire brigade's engines. The fire brigade personnel have been to the institution several times with their engines and checked the location of the hydrants, exit routes, water pressure, etc. as well as linking up their engines with the centre's fittings. The last time such an exercise was carried out was in late 2003. There are no water sprinklers installed in any of the accommodation rooms.

8.4 Hand-held fire extinguishers are located in steel containers throughout the buildings that are occupied. They consist of 36 CO<sub>2</sub> gas, 7 water, 34 foam,

6 powder and 2 automatic which are located in the boiler house and activate automatically when the heat within reaches the activation level. There are also 4 fire blankets.

8.5 There are smoke detectors installed throughout the buildings and rooms which are linked into control display panels that are located at the main front door, general office and ACO/Chief Officer's office. There are also several "break glass" units installed throughout the buildings and in the event of the glass being broken and the button pushed an alarm will sound. The institution has both a general alarm bell and a siren on the roof, which can be heard throughout the entire buildings and even well beyond the environs of the centre when activated. The smoke-detector alarm system also has bells installed in the accommodation corridors as well as in the other areas already outlined. There are no smoke extraction systems installed in the centre. There are fire doors installed on the corridors and in bedrooms numbered one to five which are electronically linked to the smoke detection system. The fire doors can also be operated manually. There are emergency exits from all of the accommodation areas as well as from all of the other occupied sections such as offices, stores, school, etc. Emergency lighting is also installed in the event of a power failure. They have a separate generator. The emergency light fittings do not have a special protective covering as in some other prisons and the staff stated that the offenders do not interfere with them.

8.6 The servicing of the fire and emergency equipment is carried out by both outside contractors and local trades staff. Some of the contracts are for yearly servicing, others quarterly, others twice yearly, while the trades staff carry out weekly checks on a lot of the equipment. The records concerning these services and checks were up to date and all of the contracts entered into had been complied with. The only exception being the smoke detector panels, break-glass unit panels and alarm system panels which were last serviced on 9th February 2005 but the inspector was assured that the contractor was coming in to do same the following week. (the week after our inspection).

8.7 The staff did not receive any refresher training in BA or phase one of C & R during the past year. One fire evacuation drill exercise was carried out on the 7th October 2005 but none the previous one and a half years. The exercise involved 42 prisoners, 23 staff, it took place at 11.05am and the time recorded for the complete evacuation was four minutes. Eleven staff received refresher training (familiarisation) in the use of fire hoses, standpipe connections, fire extinguishers, etc. in the past 12 months. Staff are issued with a pocket-sized booklet re fire safety, location of fire-fighting equipment and evacuation procedures for their particular areas of responsibility. There are no written instructions given to offenders about fire safety/evacuation but they are given verbal instructions plus a walk around pointing out the exits, the fire plan on the wall, evacuation assembly point, etc. at committal stage.

8.8 None of the offenders' bedrooms or dormitories are locked therefore there is no need for the fire brigade personnel to have any access to keys as in a conventional prison. However, there are arrangements with the fire brigade personnel re their being met and given a copy of the fire plan in the event of an emergency. The fire brigade personnel visited the centre at least once per year up to 2003 but with the threat of closure and the decrease in the numbers held there, no visit has taken place since then.

8.9 The offenders are allowed to smoke everywhere within the building except the dining room, visiting room, and some selected bedrooms, gym, classrooms and surgery. The same applies to staff except in the kitchen or dining areas. Offenders are allowed matches/cigarette lighters in their rooms as well as a tv, radio, kettle and electric razor. They are not allowed a computer, video, PlayStation or DVD players in their rooms. A purchasing policy applies within the stores specifying that all room furnishings, including the bedding, conform to non-flammable standards.

## **9. Recommendations**

1. That the medical examination room be made bigger either by relocating or removing some of the material (files, etc.) within it so that there is free access to all sides of the examination couch. [6.4 page 23]
2. That the surgery be provided with a defibrillator. [6.4 page 24]

3. That a quantity of paper cups be provided in the doctor's surgery to replace the present practice of one plastic cup being used by all offenders taking medication orally. [6.4 page 25]
  
4. That the old medical files be returned to the committal prison of the offenders concerned or additional filing cabinets be provided to contain same. If cabinets are to be purchased, then they should be stored securely in an area outside of the doctor's surgery. [6.4 page 23 and 26, 6.4(B) page 27]
  
5. That the Probation and Welfare service be requested to relax its policy of a three-year maximum for assignments of its staff to prison duties and to consider extending such assignments on a case-by-case basis. The current Probation and Welfare Officer wishes to remain in Shelton Abbey and her reasoning sounds commendable. The management also wishes her to remain. [6.5 page 27, 10.8 page 68]
  
6. That offenders being considered for transfer to Shelton Abbey should have at least a year or more of their sentence left to serve. The present practice of allowing them to come here for a very short period is contrary to the ethos and potential of this centre. [This recommendation does not prevent shorter-sentenced offenders being transferred but the majority of the population of Shelton Abbey should



have at least 12 months or more of sentence remaining to serve.] [6.5 page 27, 6.8 pages 36 and 37]

7. That the "Connect" project be extended to Shelton Abbey if the number of offenders held here increases to 100 - 150. [6.7 page 35, 10.3 pages 64 and 65]
8. That the services of a psychologist be made available to the offenders here for at least one day per week. [3.4 page 9, 6.4 page 23]
9. That the farm and gardens attached to Shelton Abbey be used to their full potential. This centre should be self sufficient in the supply of fresh vegetables, potatoes, fruit, flowers, shrubs, etc. [Any surplus to go to other institutions.] [7.10 page 56, 6.7 page 33,34]
19. That the general office, personnel office and stores office be centralised and provided with sufficient storage facilities within the one location. [7.5 pages 47, 48 and 49]
11. That the unclaimed clothing and property stored in black plastic bags in the reception area be sorted, tidied and where necessary removed, if those to whom it belongs are not contactable or are unwilling to call to centre to collect same. [7.7 page 52]

12. That a sign be erected at the junction on the entrance roadway pointing to “Shelton Abbey” as there is a sign there already which states “Shelton” but this roadway leads into the forest. [2.1 page 6]
13. That the work on the room being renovated for library use be expedited as soon as possible to enable offenders to have a badly needed library service. [7.3 page 45]
14. That the centre be provided with qualified counsellors (both drug & alcohol) for at least two days per week. [10.9 page 69; 6.4 page 23]

## **10. Conclusions**

- 10.1 Shelton Abbey is a well maintained open centre situated in beautiful wooded surroundings, yet with plenty of open space around it. On entering, one would be impressed with the relaxed atmosphere which is added to by the sight of pheasants, ducks and rabbits wandering around the grounds from the nearby woods and streams. Staff and offenders address each other on first-name terms and the staff wear civilian attire, so the ethos of an open centre is well established. The overall number of staff and offenders is quite small and as a result everyone gets to know each other very well.
- 10.2 The centre appears to be suffering from the aftermath of the threatened closure or change of management. Morale is still not very high but apparently it was worse. Some of the staff are very enthusiastic about getting the centre restored or even made better than “its good old days”, while others are still

pessimistic about its future. The fact that a lot of changes are coming down the line and quite a few redeployments are due to take place adds to the uncertainty. It requires a lot of meetings between staff, management and headquarters to point the path to its future and allay a lot of the misunderstandings that appears to be there at present.

- 10.3 The centre can accommodate 60 offenders at present and there were 45 there during the week of our inspection. We were informed that the capacity was going to be increased dramatically to 100 or even 150 and that the education and work for them would be increased accordingly. This will require an expenditure of money and an increase in staff. It will also require careful planning, as it will entail additional building and a better selection process of the offenders assigned to the centre, which should include a sentence plan plus sufficient work to occupy them fully while there. It should also include good educational facilities and should ensure that the offenders who choose education are rewarded with early release on equal terms with those engaged in work. There appears to be a perception at present that those who work may be better placed for temporary release than those who attend classes. The "Connect" project should be extended to Shelton if the numbers are increased. The length of sentence that offenders have left to serve should also be reviewed as we were told that on average an offender spends only between eight and twelve weeks in the centre. If this is true then it is almost impossible to have any meaningful programme for him in such a short time.

10.4 There appears to be a daily lack of work to occupy offenders fully, especially at this time of year when the full growth is gone and lawns, gardens, etc. are no longer in full bloom. The farm has great potential but again may lack work during the winter season. It is very well serviced with fine outhouse facilities which could be used for various projects. Plastic tunnels or glasshouses could also be considered as well as some farm animals which require year round care. It has the potential to occupy quite a number of offenders as well as providing the vegetables, fruit, etc. for use throughout the prisons. The officer at present in charge of the garden has tremendous experience in the area of horticulture and has taken a great interest in the work and development of the gardens at this centre over many years but apparently he is not continuing in the role as a result of the introduction of the new working arrangements. It is a pity that a person with such skill, knowledge and interest in this field cannot be retained in his present role.

10.5 The smuggling of illegal drugs into the centre is an ongoing problem and there are random urine sample tests carried out to establish whether offenders are abusing drugs. If their samples are returned with a positive reading from the laboratory, offenders are transferred to their prison of origin. The records show that only one offender has been on disciplinary report in the past six months for attempting to smuggle drugs into the centre, while a total of 84 offenders have been on disciplinary reports in the same period. No offenders were on report for assault on staff or on fellow offenders. Ten offenders

were transferred out of the centre arising from disciplinary reports. Forty offenders have absconded from the institution in the past twelve months and twenty of those remain unlawfully at large. Eight failed to return off temporary release in the same period, three of whom are still at large. [So there are a considerable a number of absconders in view of the overall numbers held in the centre.]

- 10.6 The staffing level for the institution is operating at 6.5 under their approved posts. They are being granted an additional 9.5 extra staff with the new working arrangements, which are due to come into operation in mid-November 2005. The clocking-in system is working well and the pay cheques are now being issued directly via computer link from Finance Section in Killarney. This has eliminated a considerable amount of paper/book work. There is an average of two to three staff per day on sick leave while there are three staff on continuous sick leave for six months or more. The total average overtime worked per week is 260 hours while 5.2% of the staff work no overtime. The staff turnover for the past year was six with three new staff members arriving and three retiring. Two staff have requested a transfer out of the centre. No staff disciplinary oral hearing has taken place in the past twelve months. One offender escaped while under escort in the past year. Very little staff training or development has taken place during the year and this has been attributed to the shortfall of staff and the financial restraints/budgets imposed on them. Twelve staff received training in the use of computers while two others participated in a hygiene course. Two staff

participated in senior management courses while other courses carried out were, management of food hygiene, health and safety, PMDS, industrial relations and mediation techniques. One staff member is in further education studying science and environmental management. Regarding refresher training, all of the staff have received familiarisation training in the use of fire extinguishers, hose reels, hydrants, standpipe connections, etc. in the event of an emergency. However, there has been no refresher training in the use of BA equipment and phase I of C&R. A fire evacuation drill was carried out on 7 October 2005. The morale among the staff is quite mixed: some are very positive and looking forward with enthusiasm while others are pessimistic and do not think the new working arrangements will work.

- 10.7 The educational needs of the offenders are looked after by three full-time and nine part time teachers. The classrooms (except one) and the gym are located in prefab buildings in an area at the rear of the main building and overall are not very suitable for this use. No offenders sat the Leaving or Junior Certificate in 2004 but 75 offenders received accreditation/certificates in the following areas, FETAC, ECDL, SafePass and driving theory. One offender sat an Open University exam. A wide range of courses is available to the offenders and four of the teachers are involved in remedial work which entails ten hours per week. The Head Teacher stated that she was fully supportive of suitable and capable offenders giving other offenders one-to-one education tuition but when this was raised with a group of offenders they stated that they were informed by teachers that only teachers

would be involved in providing education at this centre. This type of one-to-one tuition among offenders has been very successful in some of the British prisons. The gym building is not very suitable for its purpose and indeed the whole educational facilities will have to be reviewed if additional offenders are assigned to Shelton Abbey.

- 10.8 There is one Probation and Welfare Officer attached to the centre and she works three days per week. She is based in Arklow and has a clerical back-up staff there. She is also involved with Wicklow drugs awareness group which takes up quite a part of her time. She would have an average of nine to ten offenders per day for individual consultations as well as meeting their families from time to time. She and the teaching staff conduct courses such as addiction awareness, pre-release, getting-out programme, and anger management. The Probation and Welfare Service have a policy of assigning an officer to a prison/institution for a specified time and at the end of that time the officer is transferred to other assignments. The Welfare Officer attached to this centre has now reached the end of her assignment but wishes to remain. The prison management would also like her to remain. The Inspectorate recommends that the Probation Service relax this policy and deal with placements on a case-by-case basis rather than a blanket rule. The Welfare Officer raised the issue of a proper consulting room that assures privacy and confidentiality. On checking this with local management the Inspectorate was shown a room with all of these facilities, a prefab building at

the rear of the main building. The welfare officer was informed she could use it whenever she required same.

10.9 The offenders' medical needs are well looked after by two doctors who attend the centre on alternate days and are on call in emergencies at weekends. The doctors stated that the offenders were generally all physically well young men and their medical problems were minimal. They do not conduct methadone maintenance programmes. There is no psychiatrist available to the centre and anyone who is considered to have any mental illness is returned to their previous prison. There is no psychologist attached to the centre and all agree that this service is badly needed even for one or two days per week. There is also a need for counsellors (both drug and alcohol), and their services, for at least two days per week, would benefit the offenders tremendously. The surgery is too small and there is a need for a few filing cabinets to store all the files that are no longer in use. (Perhaps those files could be returned to the offenders' committal prisons.) The doctors also require a defibrillator for the centre. There were no complaints concerning dental treatment or of the diet or of the services provided by the optician.

Shelton Abbey is well maintained. The bedrooms are in the process of being repainted at present as well as the halls and corridors. It is very clean with floors polished and a high standard of hygiene throughout. The storage area off the reception where offenders' lockers are located could be improved with



the removal of a lot of the black plastic bags and the dispersal of clothing which appears to have been there for a considerable time. Otherwise the entire centre was very tidy.

10.10 The centre is at a crossroads at present. It is rising out of a period of uncertainty which affected everyone, both staff and offenders, but there are expectations and a lot of goodwill to expand, increase the numbers and make it work. It has good potential and with careful planning, it should become a good rehabilitative centre with plenty of work, education, sentence management, good selection process and seen as a reward institution. This will require full support and energy from all concerned, plus clear guidelines and managerial skills from local managers and headquarters.

10.11 The Inspectorate wishes to thank the Governor and all the staff for their co-operation, help and hospitality shown us throughout the inspection. A special word of thanks to the Acting Governor and the Liaison Officer who ensured that our visit went very smoothly and attended to our requests very professionally. The catering staff also did the centre proud.