

**Minister Shatter,  
Department of Justice & Equality  
94 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.**

**We, the undersigned members of  
Loughan House Visiting Committee,  
have pleasure in presenting this, our  
Annual Report for 2011.**

The following are the Members who served on the Committee during 2011 :

Mr. Clifford Kelly 082293Y (Chairperson)  
Mr. Brendan Hughes 082214Y  
Mr. Eamon Kinch 0824763  
Mrs. Kathleen Richey 0822159  
Mr. Eddie Feeley 0823163  
Mr. Naul McCole  
Mr. Tommy Reilly 0824828  
Mr. Gerry O'Connor 5065127  
Mr. Francis McDermott 5065119

Numerous changes on the committee occurred during the year, with the following expiry dates applying for some members:

Mr. Kelly - 16.11.2011  
Mr. Hughes - 16.11.2011  
Mr. Kinch - 03.06.2011  
Mrs. Richey - 16.11.2011  
Mr. Feeley - 01.12.2011  
Mr. McCole - 16.11.2011  
Mr. Reilly - 23.06.2011

The Committee held a total of 10 meetings throughout the year, all of which were well attended.

Mr. Pat Kavanagh served as Governor during the year, while Mr. Liam Spacey was welcomed by the committee as Chief Officer in February 2011.

***Number of Offenders in Loughan House***

Loughan House remains a transfer Place Of Detention - in 2011 it received precisely six hundred offenders on transfer, mainly from committal prisons - this represents a 1.5% increase on the amount for 2010. By and large, there was compliance with periods of temporary release, while forty two prisoners absconded in 2011.

***Visits by the Committee***

During the year, other than for scheduled meetings, committee members visited unannounced and in rotation as per their panels. The House, Grounds and environs of the Prison were at all times found to be in good condition. Members signed themselves in, in the book provided, and checked to see if there were any prisoners with specific requests to meet with them. As part of their tour of the prison, they would speak randomly with offenders and not in the hearing of others. As a group, and on the instruction of the Dept. of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, we visited the Training Unit in the Mountjoy Complex on a single trip during the year. This proved to be very insightful, with new ideas being formed for suggested use back in Loughan House.

### ***Visits to Offenders from family & friends***

Visits are very important to the Offenders - there is a recognition amongst them that regulations are quite flexible in Loughan House, in relation to time allowed for the visit etc. - this is important we feel as, with the below average frequency of a public transport service, some visitors do not get to visit as often as they would otherwise like to.

### ***Kitchen / Catering Dept.***

The Kitchen continues to earn the high regard reported by both the prisoners who receive their meals there and the external auditing agencies. The staff are professional, highly trained and motivated. The Kitchen provides great opportunity for offenders to learn the art of catering. The 28 day menu cycle provides for nutrition and a healthy diet. Those with special dietary requirements are well catered for, be they vegetarian, vegan, diabetic or having specific allergies to certain food types.

### ***Education Unit***

The Education Unit retains it's pivotal function in Loughan House and it's work is well deserving of the support given to it by prison management. Head Teacher Ms. Brenda McMullen continues to lead a dedicated team, who are proactive in reaching out to offenders and meeting their changing educational needs. Students report a high level of satisfaction with the subjects on offer, with various levels of expectation and ability being facilitated. Educational tours/projects such as to *The Arigna Mining Experience*, *The Sculpture Project in Manorhamilton* and *The Eagles Flying Project* proved both popular and beneficial. The fact that such high levels of participation in School activities and classes are being attained on a voluntary basis speaks volumes about the work being done at the Education Unit.

### ***Library Services***

The provision of Library Services is deemed very important by the Committee, especially in the evenings and at weekends. Staffing levels have had an impact on services, despite the best endeavours of management. The option of bringing the library under the auspices of the Education Unit/V.E.C was investigated, with the Governor offering accommodation within the New Education Unit - the results of a feasibility audit are currently being awaited. Also considered was the Mobile Library Service and meetings were held with Cavan County Council to discuss all options. Meanwhile, the library facility has been moved to a more suitable location in Pine Lodge and it is opened three times per week by the part-time librarian. Discussions are ongoing re; the possibility of a trustee prisoner taking a more active role in the provision of a service at other times.

### ***Laundry Services***

The Contract for laundry services expired during the Summer and was not renewed due to the costs involved. A Prison Laundry is now Operational onsite under the supervision of an Assistant Industrial Supervisor and is working extremely well.

### ***Probation & Welfare Services***

Senior Probation Officer Maeve Brett provides a very good service to Loughan House, meeting the needs of both the Offender and the Public. While she can only attend here on a part-time basis due to professional commitments elsewhere, her work is seen as most valuable and is indeed appreciated. To assist her in her endeavours, we support efforts to have a full-time Probation Officer appointed here.

### ***Addiction Counselling Service***

Maura Clerkin & Louise Kelly continue to work closely with inmates on a one-to-one basis and they also organise the visiting of such help-groups as Alcoholics Anonymous. Given the challenges faced by those in addiction, we value the efforts of the addiction counsellors immensely - hoping that many will find here, the help they need to return to a more fulfilling, dignified and less destructive lifestyle on release.

### ***Healthcare***

Nurse Officers provide day service from 8am to 8pm and, while there is a nurse officer available almost every day, efforts are made to meet any shortfall by using agency staff. Dental Services have been cut from one visit by the dentist per week to one per month. While this is seen as a steep cut to services, the Committee recognises the pressures being placed on resources in every area of each Department. The work of the Nursing staff, in conjunction with that of the visiting G.P, leaves the Committee in no doubt that every effort is being made to assist offenders with their medical needs. The discipline duties also being undertaken by Nurses, alongside their medical roles, is necessary at the moment it seems, but we await the findings of the Transformation Team in this and in other regards. Where medical requirements cannot be met in Loughan House, such as psychiatric evaluation, these needs are sometimes met by transferring the prisoner to Castlerea for the benefit of best medical assessment/intervention. We support and encourage the consideration of Temporary Release, where suitable and practical, for medical appointments and procedures.

### ***Chaplaincy***

Fr. John McMahan attends Loughan Hse, both to meet with offenders and to say mass, which is available both weekly and on Holy Days. The Spiritual / Religious needs of all prisoners are respected and encouraged, regardless of their origin or beliefs. There is no evidence of racial, religious, sexual or other discrimination at play in Loughan and indeed, none has been reported to us in our encounters with offenders.

### ***Grounds / Environs of the Prison***

Compliments are extended to the offenders who work both outside and inside the prison, keeping the area clean, tidy, presentable and welcoming. A word of thanks to the management and to supervising staff also, for making such work possible. The work being undertaken has extended outside of the prison environment, with tidying-up, creation of flower-beds etc. in Blacklion earning credit for Loughan House. The

Sculpture Project in Manorhamilton placed inmate's work on display at the All-Ireland Fleadh in Cavan in August to great commendation.

***Overview***

Loughan House remains a very valuable and worthwhile facet of the Prison Service, both for the offenders who have been deemed suitable for transfer here and for those aspiring to prove themselves suitable - it is an incentive for better behaviour and for taking responsibility for one's own sentence management. Staff are courteous and helpful and the relationship between Officer and Offender is different and better than that which would be possible in a bigger, closed institution. This relationship, we feel, is a contributor to the fact that self-harm and suicide attempts are not prevalent in Loughan House. All services are of a high quality, from the Gym to the Education Unit to the Tuck shop - the very low level of complaint to this body of any issues/problems being experienced by offenders is testament to a smooth-running institution which is fit for purpose.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Block Capitals \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Block Capitals \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_