

**An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
agus Comhionannais**
Department of Justice
and Equality



Oifig an Ard-Rúnaí | Office of the Secretary General

Ms Margaret Falsey
Committee Secretariat
Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Your Ref.: PAC32-I- 1000
Our Ref.: 0704115031

Dear Ms Falsey,

I refer further to your correspondence of 3 July, 2018 with regard to the Committee meeting of 28 June, 2018 in which the Committee requested a note on the progress of the implementation of change in the Irish Prison Service (IPS).

I have been informed by Mr. Michael Donnellan, Director General, IPS that the IPS is currently implementing a number of changes across the organisation. The IPS One Plan was developed in response to three separate independent reports which made a number of recommendations for the future development of the IPS. In 2015 the Inspector of Prisons issued an independent report on Culture and Organisation within the IPS. In 2017 Mazars were commissioned to produce a report on Organisation Structure and Governance of the IPS. In addition the Department of Justice Working Group on Improved Governance Structures for the Prison Service also produced its report.

The Plan covers three main areas, Structural change, Governance change and People change with approx. 100 recommendations and is designed to bring about the biggest fundamental change within the IPS since its Establishment in 1999. Delivery is phased in time frames of 6 - 12 month, 12 - 24 month and 24 - 36 months. Work is progressing well in relation to the 6 - 12 month category, with many of the recommendations either complete or nearing completion within the intended timeframe. It is recognised that governance changes will also be required to give full effect to the recommendations.

The recommendations which have already implemented include inter alia;

- The Directors of the IPS should be constituted as a Board chaired by the Director General and each of them should have the specific professional competences and skills necessary to lead their directorate.
- In terms of Prison Rule 99(2) the Minister should appoint a Director of Prison Healthcare services
- In advance of any new round of prison officer recruitment there should be a review of the selection and assessment processes to ensure that those who are selected to join the IPS meet the highest appropriate standards.
- There should be a review of the best method for delivering initial training for new recruit prison officers. As a minimum the former Higher Certificate in Custodial Care should be resuscitated in an updated format in conjunction with an academic institution
- The Provision for 50 hours training annually for each member of staff should be met in all but the most exceptional cases.
- Consideration should be given to introducing a formal system for publicly recognising staff who carry out their duties in an exemplary manner.

There are a number of recommendations currently being considered subject to the availability of resources which include:

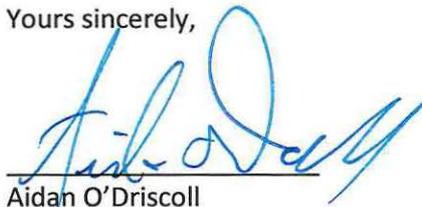
- Each member of the senior management team should have the necessary professional competence to manage the department or unit for which he or she is responsible. This is particularly important in terms of human resources and finance.
- The person in charge of each function should carry the title of head of the function: for example, Head of Operations, and as a body they would make up the senior management team under the Governor's leadership. Each of these named individuals would be responsible directly to the Governor with the proviso that the Head of Healthcare in the prison would have a direct line to the IP/s Director of Healthcare in respect of clinical issues.
- Each function should have a number of branches or units with a named manager in charge of each reporting to the head of function. The larger units such as the accommodation blocks or divisions should have named first line managers in charge at all times.

There are also a number of recommendations which will take longer to implement and will be considered in due course. These include considering recruitment to senior level from other professions with a view to preparing them for possible future appointments as Governors, giving each prison its own budget and replacing the current performance management system.

The IPS currently operates within a statutory framework as an executive agency of the Department of Justice and Equality. The practical effect of this is the Director General of the IPS and his team carry out the day-to-day operation of the prisons. The devolution of further management functions, expanding and strengthening the role and functions of the Director General, is planned to take place over the next two years.

The Committee will also be aware that the Effectiveness and Renewal Group which was established by Government in January of this year to monitor and guide change within the Department is examining the governance relationship between the Department and the IPS amongst other agencies and the Group's work will therefore impact on how these matters are addressed into the future.

Yours sincerely,



Aidan O'Driscoll
Secretary General

October, 2018