

Prison Review Team

A review of the conditions of detention, management and oversight of all prisons

29 JULY 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

CALL FOR EVIDENCE – PRISONS REVIEW PURSUANT TO THE AGREEMENT AT HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE OF 5 FEBRUARY 2010

I am writing as Chairperson of the Prison Review Team, announced by the Justice Minister David Ford on 21 June, to invite you to submit written evidence setting out your views on the review. I attach at Annex A our Terms of Reference and information on the membership of the review team at Annex B.

I recognise that there have been a number of reviews, inspections and investigations into aspects of the prison system in Northern Ireland. This review will want to consider those, but does not aim to replicate what has already been done. In a new political context, it provides a real opportunity to move forward, to reform and modernise the prison system. We will be taking a first principles approach to what an effective prison system should look like, with a view to achieving a new consensus on the future role of custody in order to develop an effective prison system in and for Northern Ireland drawing on best practice.

The review will consist of two main stages. The first will include a review of the regime at Maghaberry Prison. Second, the review will cover the remaining matters identified in the Hillsborough Agreement, such as the replacement prison for Magilligan and the accommodation for women offenders. It will also consider wider issues pertaining to the Service, including the effective use of resources, the future composition and ethos of its workforce, and the management and governance of prisons, building on the work achieved in the first stage and on other ongoing work.

It is against this background and in the context of devolution, that we are seeking information to support the review. The questions at Annex C set out the kind of issues we wish to cover. We would like views that are based on your own, or your organisation's experience, and you may therefore not wish to answer all of the questions. You may also wish to direct us to documents or evidence that you have already published or provided.

Your contribution will be a key part of the review, as it is important that our work is founded on a strong evidence base, drawing on the knowledge and experiences of a wide range of stakeholders. In parallel and during the course of the review, a number of focus groups, seminars and meetings will be held.

If you would like to make a submission you may do so in writing by **16 September 2010, preferably by email, to:**

prisonreviewteam@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk

or by post to:

Mandy Morrison
Prison Review Team
Block 1, Knockview Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SL

We will not publish the evidence that is sent to us and will treat it as confidential. If you consider that evidence that you plan to submit may raise issues concerning the Data Protection Act, please contact the Review Team before you submit your evidence.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Dame Anne Owers
Prison Review Team

REVIEW TEAM TERMS OF REFERENCE

To conduct a rolling review, in line with the agreement at Hillsborough Castle of 5 February 2010, encompassing the conditions of detention, management and oversight of all prisons. The review is to report to the Minister of Justice.

It is envisaged that the review will consist of several stages. The first will include a review of the regime at Maghaberry Prison. That will take account of:

- (a) recent reports on Maghaberry (including the CJINI/HMCIP inspection and the two Pearson reports),
- (b) developments in both the integrated and the separated regimes already in place and previous reviews of the regime,
- (c) the development plans already in hand by the Governor of Maghaberry, in consultation with Prison Service management.
- (d) NIPS management's programme for Workforce Reform and associated projects.

Second, the review will cover the remaining matters identified in the Hillsborough Agreement, building on the work achieved in the first stage. It is envisaged this stage may be in two strands. One strand would include:

- (a) issues specific to Magilligan Prison, including particularly the replacement of the prison recognising that much of the accommodation and infrastructure is not fit for purpose, and
- (b) issues at Hydebank Wood relating in particular to the development of the strategy for women offenders including the scope for a discrete facility, and developments in relation to juvenile offenders at Hydebank Wood in liaison with the Youth Justice Agency.

The second strand would consider wider issues affecting the future development of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, including its future composition and its culture and ethos.

The Review Team will draw on the extensive body of work that has been undertaken by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate in its consideration of the current issues facing the Prison Service. The Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice will also act as an adviser to the Review on these issues, including the current review of governance.

In all its work, the Review Team will wish to take the views of the full range of stakeholders, including prison management, staff, trades unions, prisoner fora and other prisoner representative groups, and the Assembly Justice Committee. It will also be informed by developments in Prison Services across these islands.

It is envisaged that the first stage of the review should be reported to the Minister by Autumn 2010 and the second stage by early 2011.

REVIEW TEAM MEMBERSHIP

Dame Anne Owers

Dame Anne Owers was appointed HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales between 1 August 2001 and 14 July 2010. From 1992 to 2001, Anne was Director of Justice. During that time she was a member of various Government committees including the Home Office Task Force on the implementation of the Human Rights Act and the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct. She carried out work on human rights, asylum and the provision of legal services, becoming a member of both the Public Interest Advisory Panel of the Legal Services Commission and the Bowman Review of the Administrative Courts. She is also a non-executive director of the Criminal Cases Review Commission in England and Wales, and the chair of Christian Aid Britain and Ireland.

She was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the 2009 New Year honours list.

Phil Wheatley

Phil read Law at Sheffield University and on graduating in 1969 joined HM Prison Service as an Officer. He worked in a variety of prisons before becoming Governing Governor of Hull Prison in 1986. In 1990, he moved to HMPS Headquarters where he held a variety of operational management jobs. He was Director General of HMPS from 2003 to 2008, before becoming Director General of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), a post he held until recently. In 2004 he was made a Companion of the Order of Bath (CB).

Fergus McNeill

Fergus is a Professor of Criminology Social Work in the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (at the University of Glasgow). Prior to becoming an academic in 1998, he worked for a number of years in residential drug rehabilitation and as a criminal justice social worker. His research interests and publications have addressed a range of criminal justice issues including sentencing, community penalties and youth justice. Latterly his work has focussed on the policy and practice implications of research evidence about the process of desistance from offending.

Paul Leighton

Paul Leighton retired in 2009 as Deputy Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. He worked closely with the Chief Constable in providing overall direction to the service.

Prior to this he had been an Assistant Chief Constable with the Northumbria Constabulary.

In the 2005 Birthday Honours, Paul was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in recognition of his services to policing and he was made a CBE in 2010.

Paul is currently Chair of Crimestoppers in NI, a regional Board member of the Prince's Trust and an Advisory Board member for Childline and NSPCC. In 2009 he was appointed by the Home Secretary to sit on the Hillsborough Independent panel dealing with issues arising from the Hillsborough football tragedy in which 96 people died in 1989.

Clodach McGrory

Clodach practiced at the Bar in Northern Ireland from 1990 to 1995 and subsequently worked at the Law Centre (NI). She was a member of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human rights from 1998 to 1999 and served on the Irish Human Rights Commission from December 2000 until August 2006. She is currently a part-time Chairperson of Social Security Appeal Tribunals and is also a Parole Commissioner. She is a Sentence Review Commissioner from 1998.

CALL FOR EVIDENCE QUESTIONS

- Q1. What would be the characteristics of an effective prison system in Northern Ireland in the 21st century, and what should be its priorities?
- Q2. At a time of financial stringency, how can resources best be used to meet those priorities?
- Q3. What is good in the current system and needs to be preserved?
- Q4. What are the weaknesses of the current system and what needs to be improved?
- Q5. What are the main obstacles to progress?
- Q6. What are the key issues that need to be addressed in the staffing and governance of the prison system?
- Q7. How effective are the arrangements for the delivery of specialist services within prisons – e.g. healthcare, education and training, offender management, substance use, faith services?
- Q8. Are there services that you think could or should most effectively be provided by outside agencies, either within or after prison? If so, how should these partnerships be managed and delivered?
- Q9. Do you have any views on specific conditions or regimes for different groups of prisoners, or the treatment of prisoners from diverse backgrounds?
- Q10. Is there anything else, specific to your organisation, that is important to this review and that we need to know?

