

**PRISON REVIEW OVERSIGHT GROUP  
JUSTICE COMMITTEE SUMMARY REPORT  
MAY 2015**

The purpose of this summary report is to provide the Committee with an update following the thirteenth meeting of the Prison Review Oversight Group (the Group), which took place on 14 May 2015.

2. The meeting was chaired by the Minister of Justice and was attended by Group members:

- Nick Perry (Permanent Secretary, DOJ); and
- Patricia Gordon (Independent Member);

3. Department of Justice officials Mark Adam (Director of HR & Corporate Services, NIPS) and Karen Pearson (Deputy Director, Access to Justice) attended to give supporting evidence to the group. Deborah McNeilly (Deputy Secretary, DHSSPS), Cheryl Lamont (Acting Director, PBNI) and Bria Mongan (Director of Adult Services, SET) were also in attendance, along with Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) inspector Dr Ian Cameron. Apologies were received from Brendan McGuigan (Independent Member, CJINI), Monica McWilliams (Independent Member) and Richard Pengelly (Permanent Secretary, DHSSPS).

**Progress Update**

4. Mark Adam provided a stock-take of progress across the Programme, with the key areas of discussion focusing on:

- The judiciary and community sentences;
- The prison estate;
- NIPS recruitment;
- The Joint Health and Justice Strategy; and
- The DOJ-led Strategic Recommendations.

**Healthcare paper on social care legislation**

5. The Oversight Group considered a paper from DHSSPS outlining legislation applicable to the provision of healthcare in prisons. This paper was provided following a request at the December meeting from the Oversight Group independent members for an outline of the relevant legislation governing the provision of social care in prisons.

6. The paper provided by DHSSPS focused on the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 and related repeals from the Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953. The Oversight Group noted that this was not the totality of the relevant legislation and requested that some additional work be undertaken to reflect this, including looking at the relevant healthcare legislation.

### **Recommendations referred to CJINI for assessment**

7. The Oversight Group agreed that the following three recommendations should be passed for independent assessment:

- PRT 27 (Part B) – Appraisal system;
- PRT 33 – Desistance Strategy; and
- PRT 35 – Roll-out of Inspire

8. These three recommendations had been previously submitted for assessment but were returned by the Oversight Group to enable further work to be undertaken. The Oversight Group asked CJINI to again assess the recommendations before reporting back to the Oversight Group with its independent assessment of the readiness for sign-off.

### **CJINI report on recommendations**

9. CJINI reported in detail on recommendations 08, 10, 11, 37 & 40. After considering the report from CJINI, the Oversight Group decided that the following recommendations could be signed-off:

- PRT 08 – Full body searching alternatives;
- PRT 10 – Equality & diversity reporting;
- PRT 11 – Support to foreign nationals;

- PRT 37 – Community based pilots; and
- PRT 40 – Secure College

10. On recommendation 26 (Developing and refreshing staff), CJINI remained of the opinion that, following inspection, it could not endorse the recommendation for sign-off, due to a lack of external involvement in core training and an absence of a well-developed mentoring scheme, as proposed in the PRT Report. Recognising that the changed financial climate has had a significant impact upon this recommendation, and the fact that NIPS is satisfied that the arrangements now in place meet its operational requirements in a cost-effective manner, the Oversight Group asked that a staff development plan for the next 12 months be provided to the Group at its September meeting, following receipt of which a final decision would be made on sign-off.

11. This brings to 26 the number of recommendations signed-off by the Prison Review Oversight Group. A further nine recommendations have been referred to CJINI or RQIA, as appropriate, for independent assessment. Two recommendations have been returned to NIPS for further work and three recommendations remain outstanding.

### **RQIA report on recommendations**

12. RQIA provided the Oversight Group with a report on the outstanding healthcare recommendations, with the Group discussing in detail a number of areas, including: senior level attendance at meetings; the healthcare role in Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR); staff retention; and best practice in other jurisdictions.

### **Oversight Group Annual Report**

13. The Oversight Group considered the first draft of its annual report and was content with progress. One additional chapter will be added in the coming weeks, following which the report will be issued before summer recess to the Justice Committee. The report will also be placed in the Assembly Library and published on NIPS' website.

### **Independent members' update**

14. The independent members of the Oversight Group continued to engage with stakeholders across the programme and looked forward to meeting with a wide range of Healthcare stakeholders in the coming period.

**Next meeting**

15. The Oversight Group is due to meet for the final time in September 2015.

**PRT OVERSIGHT GROUP  
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