

INSIDE ISSUES

REVIEW OF MAIL SYSTEM

See back page for information on
'HOW TO COMPLAIN' in other languages

-  如何投诉 – 请参阅背面
如何投訴 – 請參閱背面
-  Beschwerdeverfahren - Siehe Rückseite
-  Kā iesniegt sūdzību - skatiet pēdējo lappusi
-  Kaip pateikti skundą - žr. galinį puslapį
-  Bí o se lè fi j sun - Wo yin ewé iwé yi
-  Jak złożyć skargę - informacje na końcowej stronie
-  Como apresentar uma reclamação - Ver verso



A DVD for new prisoners explains the
role of the Prisoner Ombudsman

ON THE INSIDE

Prisoner Ombudsman calls for urgent
review of mail handling system **P6**

Contact us: FREEPHONE 0800 783 6317

Spring 2010

INSIDE ISSUES

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MESSAGE from the Prisoner Ombudsman

WELCOME to the Spring 2010 edition of Inside Issues



The start of the year saw great progress in transferring responsibility for policing and justice - including prisons and the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman - to our local Assembly, with the signing of the Hillsborough Castle Agreement.

Amongst other measures the Agreement gives priority to ensuring our prisons are fit for purpose. I am now looking forward to contributing to the intended reviews and discussing important issues, including the most effective way of managing women and young prisoners, with the new Justice Minister.

The agreement also calls for a review of the powers of the Prisoner Ombudsman, a move which I welcome.

Meanwhile, my colleagues and I have continued to meet with governors, staff and prisoners, and have also been on a fact finding visit to prisons and detention centres in Dublin - see page 16.

We are working hard to handle complaints from prisoners as quickly as possible, and also to follow-up and ensure any recommendations are acted on. A selection of the complaints we have dealt with appears on page 7-9, while you can get an update on the recommendations tracking process on page 17.

We also called for an urgent review of the mail handling system which you can read about on page 6.

After securing funding from the Northern Ireland Office, it has been possible to step up the pace of investigations into Deaths in Custody. We were pleased to welcome a new member of staff Wai Ki Mo, (see page 18) who has joined our team as an Investigating Officer, handling Death in Custody cases. The findings of three Death in Custody investigations have been published in the year to date, and we are making good headway with the remaining investigations. An article on page 11 describes our approach to these investigations.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find articles on changes to prison rules, a look at the new design of the Prisoner Ombudsman's website, and about the video we have made to explain to new prisoners what the Prisoner Ombudsman does and how the complaints procedure operates.

As the Ombudsman, my role is to protect and reflect the interests of prisoners. Inside Issues is one of the main ways of informing prisoners how I and my staff are doing this. Enjoy reading it and please get in touch if you have suggestions of issues you would like to see aired in its pages.

Pauline McCabe
Ombudsman

The Results are in

CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION WINNER ANNOUNCED



Anthony received a prize of £25 and copies of his design to send to family and friends. His card was also sent as the official Christmas card of the Prisoner Ombudsman.

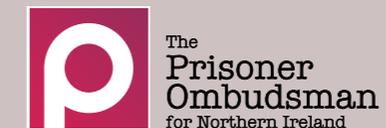
The second prize went to Mark McClean, Magilligan prison, while in third place was Henry Irwin, also of Magilligan prison.

While Anthony's design featured on the official card of the Prisoner Ombudsman, inside every card was a copy of "Prison Girl", a booklet of the poems and stories that won awards in the recent Ash House Creative Competition.



There was a good number - and an impressive standard - of entries in the Christmas Card Competition, which featured in the last edition of Inside Issues.

It was hard to pick the winner, but the Prisoner Ombudsman chose the entry by Anthony Hagans, Maghaberry prison, not only for the quality of the painting, but also because it best summed up the Christmas message and spirit.



FREEPHONE

0800 783 6317

HOW TO ACCESS US AND WHEN

If you have taken your complaint through the internal complaints process and you remain unhappy you can contact the Ombudsman by:

- **FREEPHONE 0800 783 6317**
- **Writing to us at 22nd Floor, Windsor House, Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7FT**
- **Filling out a complaint form available on your wing, landing or house.**

Remember at the end of the Internal Complaints process, if you wish the Ombudsman to investigate your complaint, you must contact the Ombudsman. Your complaint will not automatically come to us. Please also hold on to your Prison Service Complaint reference number.



PRISONER OMBUDSMAN CALLS FOR Urgent Review of Mail Handling System

The Prisoner Ombudsman has called for an urgent review of the internal mail system at Maghaberry Prison following numerous complaints, three of which have been investigated formally by the Ombudsman.



“As everyone is aware, communicating by letter is an important part of maintaining links with family and friends,” said Pauline McCabe. “This means the efficient operation of the internal mail system should be given greater priority.”

The concerns raised include delays to incoming and outgoing mail, packages arriving damaged and with date sent stamps obscured, letters going missing, items of clothing sent through the post not arriving with the accompanying letter, and worries that legally privileged documents may have been read by staff.

You can read a complete summary of one case on page 7.

One complainant said that while staff were very helpful in trying to speed things up once they were alerted to late deliveries, it was very wearing to have to keep complaining, and suggested the system should be improved.

In response to internal complaints, it was noted that letter censors make every effort to process mail as quickly as possible. The Governor who dealt with the complaints acknowledged that there have been numerous problems, and undertook to resolve these. One of the main difficulties has been understaffing of the Letter Censors’ office, leading to a backlog of mail in the system.

The Prisoner Ombudsman has twice recommended a review of the internal mail system to speed things up, and has now suggested dealing with mail should be given a higher priority when allocating staff resources.

The Ombudsman will follow this up to see what action has been taken.



COMPLAINTS and OUTCOMES

ANDREW

complained when a package of legal correspondence arrived late and in a damaged condition, with the sent date stamp covered over in red ink and unreadable.

In response to an internal complaint, Andrew was told the package was damaged when it was delivered by the Royal Mail, and that the sent date was obscured accidentally when staff stamped the envelope with a notice to draw Andrew’s attention to the fact his solicitor had not used Andrew’s full name, number and location, possibly slowing delivery.

Andrew was assured that as legal and privileged documents, Letter Censors staff had not viewed the contents. Andrew decided to refer the complaint to the Prisoner Ombudsman because he thought the response was inadequate and there was no system for ensuring the same thing would not happen again.

Andrew showed the Investigating Officer from the Prisoner Ombudsman the damaged envelope and said he thought the internal post system should record when mail arrived at the prison and when a prisoner received it.

The Investigating Officer studied the internal mail system and concluded that since Royal Mail puts any items it damages into clear plastic bags with a note of apology, the damage to Andrew’s package must have happened after delivery at the prison.

Andrew’s solicitor had not kept a record of when the package was posted, so it was not possible to confirm whether it had been held up for an unacceptable length of time in the internal system

AS A RESULT the Prisoner Ombudsman recommended that the prison should have a system like the Royal Mail’s for handling damaged items, putting them in a clear plastic bag and recording where and how the damage occurred. In addition, staff should be told not to obscure the dates on packages and letters.

GARY

received an acknowledgement that a postal order for £25 had arrived at the prison. However the sum was not transferred to Gary’s PPC account and when he asked why not, the Cashier’s Office said it had no record of the postal order.

When Gary made an internal complaint he was asked to send the letter of acknowledgement back to the Cashier’s Office and did so. This was confirmed by the Officer who forwarded the letter back to the cashiers.

However, the cashiers still said there was no record of receiving the postal order, and asked Gary again for the acknowledgement letter.

When Gary referred his complaint to the Prisoner Ombudsman the Investigating Officer met staff, who confirmed Gary regularly received postal orders. One Prison Officer said he had made enquiries about the £25, and another payment of £100 that was also lost in the system.

The Investigating Officer obtained a signed statement from an officer, confirming she had seen the letter from the Cashier’s Office acknowledging receipt of the £25 postal order.

AS A RESULT the Prisoner Ombudsman recommended the Prison Service immediately credit Gary’s PPC account with £25. The Prisoner Ombudsman was unable to investigate the £100 postal order and another postal order Gary said had gone missing, because although Gary raised internal complaints on these occasions, he did not refer the complaints on to the Ombudsman.

COMPLAINTS **and** OUTCOMES



MIKE

made an internal complaint when items of property were removed at the time of a body search and cell search.

All the items were allowed and Mike believed they had been taken because he had made a complaint of indecent assault to the police against the officer who carried out the body search.

While coffee and sugar that had been taken from him were subsequently returned to Mike, other items including magazines and newspapers were destroyed.

At this point Mike referred his complaint to the Prisoner Ombudsman, noting staff had admitted taking and destroying the property, and asking for compensation.

The Investigating Officer spoke to staff who dealt with Mike's internal complaint. Each acknowledged that the magazines and newspapers should have been stored in Mike's personal property box, or returned to his family. However Mike was refused compensation on the grounds that because the magazines and newspapers were old, their value was negligible.

AS A RESULT the Prisoner Ombudsman concluded that what happened to Mike's property was unacceptable and a breach of Prison Service policy. It was recommended that the Prison Service reimburse Mike the full cover price of all the items that were destroyed.

COMPLAINTS **and** OUTCOMES



MARK

complained that he was constantly woken up by night time head count checks and was suffering sleep deprivation as a result.

After six months of sleeping badly, the doctor prescribed Mark with sleeping tablets. However, he was still woken up every 90 minutes by the checks.

As Mark explained to the Investigating Officer when he referred his complaint to the Prisoner Ombudsman, the checks involve moving a noisy metal flap and putting the cell light on.

The Governor pointed out that there is a defect in the metal plate covers on the doors and said other prisoners had complained about the noise this causes, and the fact that the doors have a gap at the bottom that lets light into the cells. These defects were due to be corrected.

AS A RESULT the Prisoner Ombudsman said the work on the doors should be carried out as soon as possible, and staff should be told to be as quiet as possible when carrying out night checks. It was also recommended that staff should use torches and only turn on the cell light if they needed to double check all was well.



PAUL

complained when an officer wore a poppy six months after Remembrance Sunday. The same officer had previously charged Paul for wearing an Easter lily.

During the internal complaints procedure it was noted that emblems such as poppies and shamrocks are symbols of particular traditions. While Easter lilies and Orange lilies are traditional, they are regarded as paramilitary symbols, and therefore not permitted.

Prison rules say staff may not wear badges, emblems or insignia. However, the wearing of poppies is accepted practice around Remembrance Sunday.

When Paul spoke to the Investigating Officer he said he accepted the wearing of poppies around the time of Remembrance Sunday, but his complaint related to the officer wearing a poppy six months afterwards.

AS A RESULT the Prisoner Ombudsman upheld Paul's complaint. Strictly speaking, wearing poppies is not permitted and while it may be accepted practice during the Remembrance period in November, wearing poppies at other times of the year is not in keeping with promoting a neutral prison environment.



DENNIS

complained he was only offered two gym sessions per week, while other prisoners were offered up to five sessions.

In response to an internal complaint Dennis was told the difference was due to constraints in escorting prisoners from his house to the gym.

The Prisoner Ombudsman's Investigating Officer met Dennis to hear about his complaint and discussed it with prison staff. Dennis suggested the gym schedule should be reorganised to make the allocation of gym sessions fairer to prisoners in his house.

However, staff pointed out to the Investigating Officer that although Dennis was entitled to more sessions under the Earned Privileges Scheme, as a vulnerable prisoner it would not be safe for him to take part in sessions with the general prison population.

In addition, there is some gym equipment in Dennis' house for use during association periods.

The Investigating Officer also studied gym rotas, confirming that sessions are oversubscribed, and this is affecting provision for all prisoners. The Equalities Officer confirmed that the number of sessions Dennis attends is similar to that of other prisoners. Even if Dennis was not classified as vulnerable, he would not be guaranteed any more sessions.

AS A RESULT the Prisoner Ombudsman concluded that Dennis was not being treated unfairly. She recommended the Prison Service should continually review gym scheduling, paying particular attention to prisoners who are not getting as many gym sessions as they are entitled to.

AWARDS CELEBRATION

OMBUDSMAN STAFF JOIN DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD CELEBRATION



Paula Curry, Complaints Officer, Dame Mary Peters and Karen McAfee, Investigating Officer

Two members of the Prisoner Ombudsman staff, Paula Curry and Karen McAfee were invited to see Dame Mary Peters present Duke of Edinburgh Awards in the Chapel at Maghaberry Prison last November.

In all 22 prisoners and staff received awards from the former Olympian, who encouraged all those present to take up opportunities for learning and development that come their way.

"It was very interesting for me to attend, as I'm responsible for speaking to prisoners who call up on the freephone, but seldom get to meet any of them," Paula said. "Looking at the photographs

of some of the activities involved in winning an award, it's obvious that these are good for team building and helping prisoners to get to know each other better."

"I was also impressed to see how proud the recipients were to receive their rewards, and to hear a description from one of them of the challenges they had completed."

NEW WEBSITE



The website of the Prisoner Ombudsman has been relaunched following a redesign that is intended to make the site easier to navigate, and more accessible and visually appealing.

This supports the intention to ensure complete transparency and information on all the activities of the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman. In particular, the website provides easy public access to all Death in Custody reports.

The site is also a single source of information about the remit of the Prisoner Ombudsman, how to go about making a complaint, and all our publications.

"While prisoners may have limited access to the Internet, it is crucial that the general public and the family and friends of prisoners should be able to see exactly what we do," said the Prisoner Ombudsman, Pauline McCabe. "Updating the website is an important aspect of guaranteeing that transparency and accountability."

New Investigator for Complaints Team

On 15th March, John Clerkin joined the Complaints team of the Prisoner Ombudsman's Office. John has significant previous investigations experience including with the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

In the next edition of Inside Issues we will bring you more information on John and the work he will be taking forward for the Ombudsman.

How we carry out Death in Custody investigations

The Prisoner Ombudsman has a duty to investigate all deaths in prison, regardless of the cause. When notified a death has occurred the first step is to consider the circumstances and decide on the extent of the investigation that is necessary.

"My remit requires me to consider all matters for which the Prison Service is responsible, to assess which, if any, played a part in the death," says **the Prisoner Ombudsman, Pauline McCabe.**

One of the prime aims is to provide an explanation of what happened to loved ones, and meeting families to hear their concerns and share our findings is one of the most important aspects of any investigation.

At the same time, the investigation will find out exactly what happened and consider if the individual was managed appropriately, in order to see if any changes are needed to prevent the same thing happening again.

In cooperation with health professionals, the Prisoner Ombudsman will look at any health issues that are relevant, and assess any clinical care that was given.

Importantly, the findings are also used to inform the Coroner's inquest.

If the death is unexpected or suspicious and the police are investigating too, the police investigation takes precedence. "If my investigations indicate there should be either a criminal, or a disciplinary investigation, it is my duty to inform the police and/or the Prison Service," says the Prisoner Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman produces a written report of each investigation, giving the Prison Service the opportunity to comment and check facts before publication.

The Prison Service then provides a response, outlining the steps that will be taken to deal with any recommendations. "One of the most important aspects of a Death in Custody investigation is to identify and correct any shortcomings," says the Prisoner Ombudsman. "It follows that one of my most critical responsibilities is to follow up and ensure that any recommendations have been acted on."

October 2009

7th - Meeting with Prison Officers' Association to discuss investigation procedures

12th & 13th - Interviewing for Investigating Officer Post for Prisoner Ombudsman's Office

15th - Filming of "New Committals" DVD at HMP Magilligan

16th - Filming of "New Committals" DVD at Hydebank Wood

21st - Meeting with Northern Ireland Office (NIO) about resourcing of the Office in relation to Death in Custody Investigations

22nd - Meeting with Prison Officers' Association about a range of issues including ongoing Death in Custody investigations

November 2009

2nd - Meeting with Jackie Bates - Gaston, Head of Psychology Services in Northern Ireland Prison Service about the management of sex offenders in prison

4th & 5th - Visit to the Dochas Centre and Wheatfield Prison in Dublin and to the Central Mental Hospital in Dundrum, to look at best practice

9th - Meeting with Professor Phil Scraton, Professor of Criminology at Queens University, Belfast about a range of prison issues

9th - Meeting Regulatory Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) about Death in Custody investigations

20th - Meeting with Prison Officers' Association about Death in Custody investigations

25th - NI Ombudsman, the body responsible for dealing with complaints against government departments and public bodies in Northern Ireland, held their 40th Anniversary Conference

26th - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 20th Anniversary Conference

December 2009

2nd - Meeting with Governor of Hydebank Wood about a range of complaints issues

2nd - Briefing by NIPS on new Offender Management Policy

3rd - Meeting Night Custody Officers at Maghaberry about Death in Custody investigations

15th - Ministerial Safer Custody Forum, which considers a range of issues including prisoner safety and care for vulnerable prisoners

January 2010

8th - Briefing by Northern Ireland Prison Service on changes to Prison Rules

11th - Family Support Group meeting in Limavady

13th - Meeting with Children's Law Centre about issues around the detention of young people at Hydebank Wood

18th - Meeting with Security Minister, Paul Goggins about a range of issues including resourcing of Office to investigate Deaths in Custody

18th - Meeting with Criminal Justice Oversight Bodies to discuss forthcoming work areas

19th - Separate meetings with Alliance Party, Sinn Fein, SDLP and UUP to discuss devolution and statutory footing for the Prisoner Ombudsman

19th - Meeting with South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust about ongoing Death in Custody investigations

20th - Meeting with RQIA about Death in Custody investigations

25th - Meeting with NI Ombudsman about issues of mutual interest and future devolution of policing and criminal justice

26th - Meeting Mr Justice Weir about issues around the detention of young people at Hydebank Wood

28th - Speaking at QUB Conference on Devolution of Policing and Justice

Prisoner Ombudsman to take on Investigation of Visitor Complaints

The new Prison Rules which came into effect on 1 February 2010 set out a new process for dealing with complaints from visitors.

Any visitor to prison can, in the first instance, continue to raise issues or concerns with the local visits manager.

If they are unable to resolve the matter in this way they can then make a complaint to the Prisoner Ombudsman by using the complaints form which is available in all visiting areas or by calling the Prisoner Ombudsman freephone on 0800 783 6317.

Internal complaints process reduced from three stages to two

The internal complaints procedure is being streamlined following a consultation process which included discussions between the Prison Service and the Prisoner Ombudsman.



If still dissatisfied a prisoner must then refer the complaint to the Prisoner Ombudsman within 30 days.

The Prisoner Ombudsman welcomed the initiative to streamline the internal complaints procedure.

“A great many of calls we receive from prisoners relate to problems with the internal complaints procedure, and the length of time it takes for complaints to be processed,” says Pauline McCabe

The current three stages are now replaced by a two-stage process. Under the revised procedure, a prisoner now has 21 days following the cause of the grievance to raise a complaint. The Prison Service must respond within 14 days, following which a prisoner has ten days to decide whether or not to take the complaint to stage two. If so, the Prison Service has a further 14 days to reply.

Prisoner Ombudsman comments on new system for managing offenders

The Prison Service is introducing a new system for managing offenders, which is intended to reduce offending and improve public protection.

The Prisoner Ombudsman has been briefed on the system and invited to comment on the proposed changes.

“Overall the Offender Management System appears to be a step in the right direction,” said **Pauline McCabe**. “We have some concerns about how the system will be implemented, mainly related to staff training and putting in place ways of monitoring to ensure the hoped-for improvements come through. We have raised these issues with the Prison Service.”

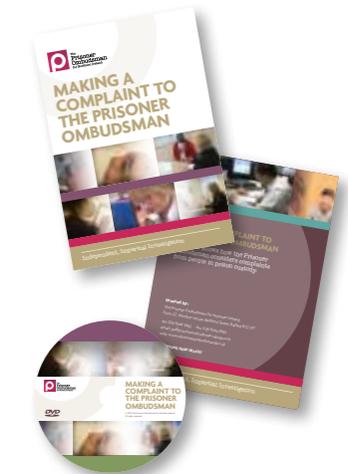
The Prisoner Ombudsman welcomed many aspects of the new system, including:

- a checklist for the induction process to ensure prisoners receive all the information they need at the start of a sentence;
- providing information about sentence time and what prisoners can do to reduce it;
- the emphasis on setting out a clear plan for each offender and deadlines for every step of an offender's sentence;
- the move to get family, friends and others involved in each individual's plan; and
- having a clear release plan in place before the time of release so prisoners know where they are going to stay, who their first contact is, and what the probation arrangements will be.

New DVD to explain Prisoner Ombudsman's role

The Prisoner Ombudsman has released a DVD explaining the duties and responsibilities of the Office. It will be shown to all new prisoners as part of the induction process.

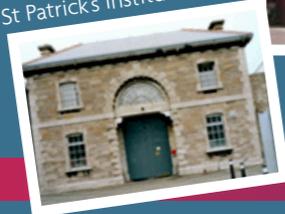
“It is very important that anyone entering prison understands the role of the Prisoner Ombudsman, how to make a complaint, and what they should expect from the Office,” says Pauline McCabe.





Prisoner Ombudsman on fact-finding tour of prisons in Dublin

St Patrick's Institution



Dochas Centre

The Prisoner Ombudsman recently went on a fact-finding visit to prisons and institutions in Dublin, hosted by the Irish Prison Service. The objective was to get a view of how these institutions are run and to look for best practice.

On the first day there was a tour of the Dochas Centre, a Women's prison, including a meeting with the Governor Kathleen McMahon, and a visit to the St Patrick's Institution, a juvenile detention facility.

This was followed by a working lunch with the Director General of the Irish Prison Service, Brian Purcell and a tour of Wheatfields Prison.

The second day began with a tour of the Central Mental Hospital in Dundrum and a meeting with a representative of the National Forensic Mental Health Service, which is based there.

Afterwards there was a visit to the Office of the Ombudsman of Ireland to meet the Director General Pat Whelan and Senior Investigator Bernie McNally.

Finally, there was a meeting with Judge Michael Reilly, Inspector of Prisons.

"It was very generous of so many people involved in the Irish Prison Service to take time to share their experience with us," said Pauline McCabe. "I believe it is very important to be able to study best practice in this way and I will be encouraging all my staff to undertake similar 'best practice' visits in the coming year."

Tracking implementation of complaints recommendations

Recommendations made by the Prisoner Ombudsman following the investigation of complaints have led to changes in a wide range of areas, from contacts with families, to the running of internal prison mail systems, and onto concerns about food hygiene.

"The complaints I receive, and the subsequent recommendations made, range from issues relating to assaults and harassment and bullying, to concerns about the temperature at which food is served and delays in dispatching a letter. We take all matters seriously, recognising that things which may seem minor can have a disproportionate impact on the morale of someone in prison," says the Prisoner Ombudsman, Pauline McCabe.

In terms of **serious assaults**, the Prisoner Ombudsman has made recommendations including reminding staff that CCTV footage, telephone and other records must be retained to allow serious incidents or complaints to be investigated, that staff should receive regular training and be assessed in their use of control and restraint, and that the role of the medical officer in examining injuries when an assault is alleged should be reviewed.

On **food**, the Prisoner Ombudsman has made recommendations on ensuring those involved in food service wear appropriate clothing and practice good hygiene, and on the introduction of checks to make sure hot food is indeed hot when served.

On the late dispatch of a letter and other issues relating to **internal mail**, the Prisoner Ombudsman has recently made a series of recommendations, to ensure outgoing mail is promptly dispatched, to ensure incoming mail is not held up or damaged, and that prisoners are advised by the Letter Censors' Office if items are confiscated.

Individual recommendations have resulted in specific changes. So, for example, on the recommendation of the Prisoner Ombudsman,

all officers and other staff working with life sentence prisoners are receiving training on the carrying out of annual reviews and the name of these reviews has been amended to 'Residential Staff Report'.

In another example, the Prison Service is taking steps to ensure no prisoner is placed in a cell with another prisoner who is alleged to have made a threat against them, until a risk assessment is carried out. At the same time, there has been a review of the process surrounding risk assessments, with a view to reducing the length of time they take to complete.

In a different sphere, recommendations from the Prisoner Ombudsman have led to changes in the arrangements for prisoners held in secure units to attend church services, or request a visit from a chaplain. Prisoners will now receive an explanation if they are refused leave to attend a church service.

Death in Custody Recommendations



Action plans for all the recommendations made in connection with Death in Custody Investigations have been requested from the Prison Service.

Since the Office took on the role of investigating deaths in custody 12 investigation reports have been submitted to the Prison Service containing a total of 173 recommendations. Developing action plans for, and taking forward implementation of, all these recommendations represents a significant amount of work for the Prison Service. The Prison Service has recently put in place new processes to help it implement agreed actions.

We will continue to seek updates on implementation of the recommendations at least every six months.

Prisoner Ombudsman meets with families of prisoners

The Prisoner Ombudsman attended a Family Support Group meeting in Limavady on 11 January 2010. The Ombudsman was invited to the meeting so that the relatives of prisoners could hear about the role and work of the Prisoner Ombudsman. The support group, which is run by a Prison Officer from Magilligan, was also attended by a family liaison officer from Maghaberry who intends to set up a similar support group in his area.

"The meeting was an opportunity for me to listen to experiences of the relatives of prisoners and difficulties they encounter," said the Prisoner Ombudsman, Pauline McCabe.

New faces at The Prisoner Ombudsman



Wai Ki Mo

Investigating Officer
Deaths in Custody

I joined the Prisoner Ombudsman as an Investigating Officer in January 2010, after having the opportunity to get a feel for the work of the Office whilst on a three month part time secondment in October 2009.

Before then I was employed at the Police Ombudsman's Office, investigating complaints against the police, which ranged in nature from misconduct to allegations of a serious criminal nature.

Having the chance to work on secondment gave me the confidence that the skills, experience and training acquired at the Police Ombudsman could

be transferred to the post of Investigating Officer at the Prisoner Ombudsman.

I also knew that I would enjoy the new challenge and the opportunity to broaden my experience in a prison setting - and to continue to conduct thorough, independent and impartial investigations.

My role is to conduct investigations of the circumstances around a death in custody. Inevitably, there are many concerns from loved ones, other prisoners and the Prison Service. It is my aim to conduct robust and thorough investigations, to respond to these concerns and to identify if there are any lessons to be learnt to prevent future deaths.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO



Pauline McCabe, Prisoner Ombudsman. Pauline oversees all death in custody investigations and personally signs off all decisions made about complaint investigations. She operates independently of the Prison Service and reports directly to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Email pa@prisonerombudsman.x.gsi.gov.uk

Whatever your complaint is about, you should initially use the Prison Service Internal Complaints System to try and deal with the problem before contacting the Prisoner Ombudsman.

If you are unhappy with the outcome you can make a complaint to the Prisoner Ombudsman in writing, using a complaint form, or by contacting the office using the **FREEPHONE NUMBER 0800 783 6317**.

When you send your complaint to us we will check if it is eligible and begin an investigation. Remember! Hold on to your Complaint Reference number so you can quote it.

A Prisoner Ombudsman Investigator will then meet with you to discuss your complaint. Then we will look carefully at all the facts and will prepare a report for the Ombudsman.

Once you and the Prison Service have seen the report, the Ombudsman will formally approve it and make recommendations, if appropriate. Where the Ombudsman makes recommendations, we will then follow up and check that these have been acted on.

Our People



Sinead Simpson

Director of
Operations



Michael Hillis

Senior Investigating
Officer Complaints



Clare McVeigh

Senior Investigating
Officer Deaths in Custody



Pat McKinney

Investigating Officer
Complaints



Wai Ki Mo

Investigating Officer
Deaths in Custody



John Clerkin

Investigating Officer
Complaints



Gemma Brown

Office Manager



Paula Curry

Complaints Officer



Sharon Hetherington

Personal Assistant
to the Prisoner
Ombudsman



Linda McIlwrath

Personal Assistant
to the Prisoner
Ombudsman



The
Prisoner
Ombudsman
for Northern Ireland



CANTONESE

不論你是投訴什麼，在聯絡犯人調查官之前，你應該先利用監獄服務內部投訴程序設法解決問題。如果這麼做了之後，你還是不滿意，你可以向犯人調查官投訴。如果你需要翻譯員協助你聯絡犯人調查官辦公室，你可以要求另外一位犯人、監獄的工作人員、獨立監控會的成員或家屬替你利用我們的免費電話號碼 0800 783 6317 與犯人調查官聯絡。調查官就會安排一個人協同翻譯員來拜訪你，幫助你進行投訴。



MANDARIN

不论你是投诉什么，在联络犯人调查官之前，你应该先利用监狱服务内部投诉程序设法解决问题。如果这么做了之后，你还是不满意，你可以向犯人调查官投訴。如果你需要翻译员协助你联络犯人调查官办公室，你可以要求另外一位犯人、监狱的工作人员、独立监控会的成员或家属替你利用我们的免费电话号码 0800 783 6317 与犯人调查官联络。调查官就会安排一个人协同翻译员来拜访你，帮助你进行投訴。



GERMAN

Egal worum es sich bei Ihrer Beschwerde handelt, sollten Sie an erster Stelle versuchen, das Problem über den internen Schlichtungsdienst der Haftanstalt zu lösen, bevor Sie sich an den Ombudsmann für den Strafvollzug wenden. Sollten Sie

die Dienste eines Übersetzers benötigen, um mit der Dienststelle des Ombudsmanns Kontakt aufzunehmen, können Sie einen Mithäftling, einen Vollzugsbediensteten, ein IMB-Mitglied oder ein Familienmitglied bitten, stellvertretend für Sie unter Freiruf **0800 783 6317** den Ombudsmann für den Strafvollzug zu kontaktieren. Der Ombudsmann wird daraufhin veranlassen, dass ein Sachbearbeiter Sie mit einem Dolmetscher besucht und Ihnen beim Vorbringen Ihrer Beschwerde behilflich ist.



LATVIAN

Neatkarīgi no tā, par ko jūs iesniedzat sūdzību, no sākuma, lai atrisinātu problēmu, jums ir jāizmanto Cietuma dienesta iekšējo sūdzību iesniegšanas kārtība (Prison Service Internal Complaints Process), pirms jūs vērsties pie ieslodzīto ombudsmena. Ja pēc tam jūs vēl aizvien neesat apmierināts (-ta), jūs varat iesniegt sūdzību ieslodzīto ombudsmenam. Ja jums ir nepieciešami tulka pakalpojumi un palīdzība, lai sazinātos ar ieslodzīto ombudsmena biroju, jūs varat palūgt citu ieslodzīto, cietuma darbinieku, IMB (Neatkarīgās uzraudzības pārvaldes) biedru vai ģimenes locekli sazināties ar ieslodzīto ombudsmenu jūsu vārdā, piezvanot pa mūsu bezmaksas tālruni **0800 783 6317**. Ombudsmens parūpēsies par to, lai pie jums ierastos amatpersona ar tulku, ļaujot jums iesniegt sūdzību.



LITHUANIAN

Koks bebūtų jūsų skundo pagrindas, pirmiausiai problemą reikėtų spręsti pagal Kalėjimų tarnybos vidaus skundų sprendimo tvarką, ir tik po to kreiptis į Kalinių ombudsmeną. Jei problemos išspręsti nepavyko, galite kreiptis į Kalinių ombudsmeną. Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo, kuris padėtų kreiptis į Kalinių ombudsmeno tarnybą, prašykite, kad kuris nors iš kalinių, kalėjimo darbuotojų, NMT (Nepriklausomos stebėjimo tarnybos) narių arba jūsų artimųjų jūsų vardu paskambintų Kalinių ombudsmeniui nemokamu telefonu **0800 783 6317**. Ombudsmenas pasirūpins, kad jus aplankytų tarnybos atstovas kartu su vertėju ir padėtų jums paruošti skundą.



NIGERIAN

Fun ẹsunkeṣun ti o bá ní, o gbọdọ kọkọ fi sun ilé isẹ afisun ti inu ogbà ewon lati yanjọ ọrọ naa kí o tó fi to alagbawi awon elewon léfi. Lehin igbà tí o bá se ẹyí tan, tí kò bá sí ẹ ọ lórun naa, o lè fi ejo naa sun alagbawi awon elewon. Tí o bá fe olutumọ èdè lati ran ọ lọwọ pelu kíkán sí ilé isẹ alagbawi awon elewon, o lè beere lowo elewon omiran, tàbí ọkan ninu awon osise igbimo ibójútọ itoju awon elewon, ẹyí tí a npe ni IMB, tàbí ará ile re lati ba o kàn sí alagbawi awon elewon lórí ẹrọ ibanisọrọ ọfẹ wa tí o je **0800 783 6317** Alagbawi naa yi o wa se ètò wípé kí eniyan kan wa rí ọ pelu olutumọ èdè lati ran ọ lọwọ pelu fífi ejo sun.



POLISH

Wszystkie skargi należy składać najpierw drogą wewnętrzną

procedury składania skarg obowiązującej w służbie więziennej. Osoby niezadowolone ze sposobu rozpatrzenia skargi mogą następnie zwrócić się do rzecznika praw więźniów (Prisoner Ombudsman). Przy składaniu skargi do rzecznika praw więźniów możliwa jest pomoc tłumacza. Osoby, które chciałyby z niej skorzystać mogą poprosić innego więźnia, pracownika służby więziennej, członka niezależnej rady monitorującej (IMB) lub członka rodziny o skontaktowanie się z biurem rzecznika w ich imieniu pod bezpłatnym numerem telefonu **0800 783 6317**. W złożeniu skargi pomocy udzieli wówczas pracownik biura rzecznika podczas wizyty z tłumaczem.



PORTUGUESE

Qualquer que seja a natureza da sua reclamação, deverá inicialmente utilizar o Processo de Reclamações Interno dos Serviços Prisionais para tentar resolver o seu problema antes de contactar o Provedor de Justiça (Prison Ombudsman). Se tiver seguido esse procedimento e ainda não estiver satisfeito, poderá apresentar a sua reclamação ao Provedor de Justiça. Se necessitar dos serviços de um tradutor para o ajudar a estabelecer contacto com o Gabinete do Provedor de Justiça, pode solicitar a ajuda de outro prisioneiro, guarda prisional, membro do IMB ou familiar para entrar em contacto com o Provedor de Justiça em seu nome através do número **0800 783 6317**, a chamada é gratuita. O Provedor enviará um membro do seu gabinete, acompanhado por um tradutor para o ajudar a apresentar a reclamação.