



Oifig An Chigire Príosún
Office of the Inspector of Prisons

Inspection Report

Follow-up Inspection: Mountjoy Prison

28 April 2025 – 2 May 2025



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Foreword by the Chief Inspector



Mountjoy Prison was the very first prison to receive an unannounced general inspection as part of the new inspection programme commenced by my Office in late 2022.

It is the ambition of my Office that every prison in Ireland will receive an unannounced general inspection at least every three years. As our current level of staff resources is not sufficient to deliver this, shorter follow-up inspections are being conducted to prisons visited some time ago, focussing on monitoring the implementation of the Inspectorate's earlier recommendations.

During the November/December 2022 general inspection of Mountjoy Prison, overcrowding was already a major issue. My concerns about this situation led me to write to the Minister for Justice immediately after the inspection. I highlighted that the size and design of many of the cells at Mountjoy meant that mattresses had to be wedged at an angle next to the in-cell lavatories. Given the minimal out of cell time offered to many men, I considered that these conditions of detention could be considered degrading.

I also drew the Minister's attention to the fact that projected rises in the prison population suggested that unless urgent action were taken, such as imposing an enforceable ceiling on the number of people who can be held in each prison, the dramatic situation observed by my team in Mountjoy Prison for Men would become a grave problem for the prison system as a whole.¹

Naturally, I take no pleasure in the fact that my predication has proven accurate. On the first day of the 2022 inspection, there were 750 people living in Mountjoy Prison; it was operating at 99% capacity and there were 35 people sleeping on mattresses on the floor. On the first day of the April/May 2025 follow-up inspection, there were 986 people in custody. The prison was operating at 122% capacity, and there were 90 men sleeping on mattresses on the floor. By December 2025, Mountjoy Prison was attempting to house 1089 men, with 145 people consigned to mattresses on the floor. The prison estate as a whole is now trying to contain nearly 5,800 men (for a capacity of just over 4,700) with over 600 people placed on mattresses on the floor.

The dramatic situation observed by my team at Mountjoy Prison in 2022 has become a national disgrace.

The principal purpose of the 2025 follow-up inspection was to assess the progress in implementing the recommendations made in 2022. In addition, the Inspectorate revisited and reassessed the recommendations made to Mountjoy Prison in our 2023 and 2024 thematic inspection reports: Thematic Inspection on Education and Work Training and Thematic Inspection: An Evaluation of the Provision of Psychiatric Care in the Irish Prison System.

During the 2025 follow-up inspection, the team found that the increase in the population at Mountjoy Prison had generated significant adverse consequences for people living and working in the prison. The documented living conditions of some prisoners sharing cells in Mountjoy Prison in 2025 were deplorable and can be considered to amount to inhuman and degrading treatment.

¹ The text of my letter to the Minister for Justice, dated 22 December 2022, can be found in the Appendix to the OIP's annual report for 2022, at this link: <https://www.oip.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Annual-Report-2022-English.pdf>

This follow-up inspection report records that the majority of the recommendations made by the Inspectorate in late 2022 remain “open”, which is to say that they have yet to be implemented. To some extent, implementation delays may be attributed to the pernicious effects of overcrowding. However, it is important the persistence of overcrowding is not relied upon as a catch-all excuse to fail to make progress in areas where this remains possible. The management team at Mountjoy Prison has demonstrated that, when it is determined to do so, it can achieve improvements notwithstanding the constraints imposed by overcrowding.

As an example, the Inspectorate welcomes the refurbishment of accommodation in the Medical Unit (F1 and F2) and in Mountjoy West (B), creating better living conditions. This achievement is particularly commendable given that cells had to be taken out of commission to allow for refurbishment at a time when capacity was already strained to the limit.

The Inspectorate also wishes to acknowledge the significant investment in upgrading some facilities at Mountjoy Prison. These include replacing the video link area for online court appearances, creating an entirely new visits area and refurbishing the chapel. Plans for the future also include developing work training facilities for protection prisoners and prisoners within the Medical Unit as well as a Men’s Shed for Mountjoy West.

This report also includes a very positive assessment of improvements made in the quality of education at Mountjoy Prison, based on the follow-up inspection undertaken by our colleagues from the Department of Education Inspectorate. Their findings are set out at the end of this report.

In December 2025, the Irish Prison Service produced an Action Plan for the implementation of the Inspectorate’s recommendations.

The Inspectorate will continue to closely monitor Mountjoy Prison, and I look forward to our future oversight work in cooperation with the Director-General of the Irish Prison Service, as well as the Governor and staff of Mountjoy.

Mark Kelly, Chief Inspector of Prisons

Respect & Dignity

Rec ID	Respect & Dignity Recommendations
MJ22-1	<p>The standard of cleanliness and state of repair across the prison should be improved and properly maintained; this includes appropriate staffing of trades posts</p> <p>The <u>standard of cleanliness and state of repair</u> varied across the prison; it was particularly poor for protection prisoners accommodated in A and B Divisions in the main prison. On these Divisions, the Inspectorate observed cells with broken windows, torn-up linoleum with nails protruding from the floor, mould, and broken and leaking toilets and sinks. Cells were poorly lit and ventilation was inadequate. Excessive temperatures of between 25 and 28 degrees were recorded in shared cells. In some cells, there were no lids on toilet cisterns and/or no toilet seats, and not all shared cells had toilet partitions. In certain cells on A2 landing, prisoners had to reach inside the cistern to flush the toilet and obtained tap water by reaching through a hole cut in the cell's dry wall, to turn a valve on the mains water pipe. Some prisoners had to use buckets to catch the water from leaking sinks.</p>  <p>Figure 1: Cell toilet facilities in main prison</p> <p>Some <u>common areas of the main prison</u> were also dirty or in poor repair. For example, some of the toilets in yards were blocked and filthy. Of four showers on D2 landing, one was not in use and the remaining three had only cold water.</p>  <p>Figure 2: Toilet conditions in yards</p>

To sum up, the living conditions of some prisoners sharing cells in Mountjoy Prison were deplorable and can be considered to amount to inhuman and degrading treatment.

Essential cell repairs could take several weeks. The Inspectorate is aware that the prison has currently only one plumber to cover the entire Mountjoy campus. **The necessary resources should be put in place to ensure repairs to cells and other common areas are carried out more swiftly.** The prison had a recording system in place to track repair response times

By contrast, the refurbishment of accommodation in the Medical Unit (F1 and F2) and in Mountjoy West (B), had created a significant improvement in the living conditions of men accommodated in these cells. **The Inspectorate commands this undertaking.** The refurbished cells were clean, bright, modern, and easy to maintain. There was a marked difference in the standard of living conditions experienced by prisoners in these cells when compared to the main prison.



Figure 3: Cell conditions in main prison compared to Mountjoy West
This recommendation remains open.

MJ22-2	<p>Prison managers should conduct ongoing recorded audits of the availability of bedding, and where necessary, ensure the replacement of all mattresses, duvets and pillows. All prisoners should each have a clean duvet, sheet, pillow and pillowcase, as well as a sufficient number of towels to use across the course of the week's activities.</p> <p>While there is a recording system in place at Mountjoy Prison for the issuing of mattresses, there are no audits conducted by prison managers of bedding and the replacement of mattresses. Most prisoners had access to bedding, although the quality of some of the bedding was poor (e.g. torn duvet covers, badly worn pillows, ripped mattresses). Prisoners only received one towel a week; this is insufficient.</p>
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Figure 4: Ripped mattress, ripped bedding

This recommendation remains open.

MJCT3	<p>Scheduling of mealtimes at Mountjoy Men's Prison should be amended to ensure meals are served at reasonable intervals and at times that correspond to those in the community.</p> <p>A positive finding was that men in Mountjoy West continued to receive their main meal at 4pm rather than at lunchtime, in line with a recommendation made in the Inspectorate's COVID-19 thematic report.² This good practice should be extended to the main prison and the Medical Unit.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open for the main prison and the Medical Unit.</p>
MJ22-3	<p>In line with Rule 75(3) and Rule 86(1)(b) of the Prison Rules 2007-2020, the Governor of the prison and all staff should maximise opportunities to interact with prisoners in a manner that is meaningful and supports their general welfare.</p> <p>The Inspectorate noted a high level of engagement between staff and prisoners in some areas of the prison. However, there is no equivalent in Ireland to the Personal/Case Officer Scheme which operates in comparable jurisdictions. Such schemes assign specific prison officers as points of contact for a limited number of prisoners who they agree to assist and support. The Inspectorate recommends that consideration be given to introducing such a scheme in the Irish prison system. Additionally, the prioritisation of prisoner-facing roles under the Regime Management Plan could provide opportunities for more meaningful interactions and supports the general welfare of prisoners (see Recommendation MJ22-16).</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJ22-4	<p>A Governor grade staff member should conduct the daily Governor's Parade; delegation of this function to Assistant Chief Officers should cease.</p> <p>The inspection team checked on procedures for the daily Governor's parades. On some landings, a Governor conducted the parade but, on other landings, this task had been delegated to an Assistant Chief Officer (ACO). It is important that all prisoners have access to a Governor grade staff member on Governor's parade.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJ22-5	<p>In line with Section 42 of the Public Sector Duty, the prison should work towards eliminating all forms of discrimination within Mountjoy Men's Prison, with due consideration to, inter alia, (i) clear communication of staff obligations under the</p>

² Office of the Inspector of Prisons (2021) COVID-19 Thematic Inspection of Mountjoy Men's Prison (1-4 March 2021)

	<p>Duty, (ii) provision of reasonable accommodations to ensure accessibility, (iii) and means to allow for the expression of one's identity and beliefs.</p> <p>The Inspectorate previously recommended that Mountjoy Prison resume the acceptance of packages dropped to the prison by family members. The use of post as the only system for receiving packages imposed an undue financial burden on families. We were pleased to find that family members are once again permitted to hand deliver items to the prison.</p> <p>The Inspectorate made this recommendation previously in the context of the prohibition of the delivery of packages by family members to this prison; this practice has been re-introduced.</p> <p>Within the context of why this recommendation was made to Mountjoy Prison (the potential for socioeconomic discrimination for prisoners' families), this recommendation is closed.</p>
MJ22-6	<p>All information materials and forms, including committal, complaints and resettlement documentation, should be readily available to people living in the prison, in all applicable languages spoken by people in custody. In addition, as is being developed in Cloverhill Prison, Mountjoy Men's Prison (and all committal prisons across the estate) should create an introductory committal video, sub-titled in the languages most commonly spoken by those committed to the prison.</p> <p>The availability of information for prisoners could be improved. Limited information was available on landings and the information provided was only in English. It was positive to see the distribution of the new Irish Prison Service information booklet to newly committed prisoners. However, these are yet to be made available in languages other than English. In addition, no complaints forms were available on the landings in the main prison. These shortcomings should be rectified.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>

Safety & Security

Rec ID	Safety & Security Recommendations
MJ22-7	<p>The Governor of Mountjoy Men's Prison must ensure that both electronic and paper-based record-keeping are comprehensive, accurate, timely and transparent in all key areas, in compliance with various provisions of the Prison Rules 2007-2020, and that ensuring good record-keeping is embedded in the prison amongst all staffing ranks.</p> <p>Record keeping was an area of concern that was highlighted during the 2022 general inspection. During the follow-up visit, the Inspectorate observed some improvements in the quality of record keeping. It was particularly noteworthy that NIMS (National Incident management System) forms were now being completed and entered on the NIMS system far more quickly and efficiently than previously. This was largely due to the reallocation of the recording of NIMS documentation from Chief Officers to the Governor's Secretary.</p> <p>Despite these improvements, some significant gaps in record keeping were identified. Not all incidents were being recorded. Incidents in which prisoners had injured each other were being noted; however, incidents in which prisoners allegedly sustained serious injuries requiring hospitalisation at the hands of staff were not. Moreover, the level of detail in use of force and relocation recording could be improved. This is an area that requires an in-depth review by senior management.</p> <p>During this follow-up inspection, we identified a number of shortcomings in the processing and recording of complaints, including a complaint of assault by an officer which has been transmitted to An Garda Síochána but had been classified as Category B rather than Category A. In addition, records demonstrated delays in obtaining statements from officers and other potential witnesses.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJ22-8	<p>The practice of relocating prisoners to the reception area on a temporary basis, should be reviewed, particularly to ensure compliance with the Prison Rules 2007-2020 and assurances of procedural safeguards.</p> <p>At the closeout meeting following the 2022 inspection, the Inspectorate raised the issue of the undocumented temporary relocation of prisoners to the reception area. During the 2025 follow-up inspection, this practice remained unchanged. Immediate steps should be taken to ensure that all temporary relocations of prisoners to the reception area are properly</p>

	<p>recorded both on the landing and in the relevant tab in PIMS (Prisoner Information Management System).</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJ22-9	<p>The Director General of the Irish Prison Service and the Governor of Mountjoy Men's Prison should ensure the complement of administrative staff assigned to the prison is sufficient to support the clerical needs of the prison. All administrative staff should receive training, on an ongoing basis, to ensure their knowledge base is appropriate to the administrative tasks assigned to them.</p> <p>The prison's general administration functions appear well resourced, however, there is still no designated administrative support for Chief Officers; the Inspectorate considers that it would be beneficial if such support were to be provided.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJ22-10	<p>The Director General of the Irish Prison Service and the Governor of Mountjoy Men's Prison should ensure a clear demarcation between an incident recording system and the P19 (disciplinary sanction) recording system.</p> <p>It remains the case that the only serious incident recording system is the NIMS, as is the case across the prison estate. The Inspectorate considers that the NIMS system, which is designed principally to submit information on future financial liabilities to the State Claims Agency, is not fit for purpose as a prison incident management system. All prisons should maintain a dedicated incident recording log including sufficient detail to enable effective management oversight of the risk factors that may have contributed to the incidents concerned.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>

Health & Wellbeing

Rec ID	Health & Wellbeing Recommendations
MJ22-11	<p>Efforts should be made to enhance prioritisation of healthcare provision by ring-fencing in the Regime Management Plan the positions of prison officers allocated to specific healthcare units to ensure transport of prisoners to appointments and to support initiatives to further develop the healthcare system and optimise the social environment.</p> <p>The Inspectorate notes that there is currently no dedicated healthcare assist post; consideration might be given to the creation of a dedicated post as part of the revision of the prison's Regime Management Plan (RMP).</p> <p>One healthcare issue raised in the 2022 inspection report concerned access to external healthcare appointments. During the 2025 inspection, Hospital Transfer Failure Forms were only being completed if prisoners declined to take up a scheduled appointment. These forms were not being used if a prisoner's appointment had to be cancelled or rescheduled due to the unavailability of escort staff. It is positive that the Chief Nurse Officer has agreed that these forms should be completed in all circumstances in which an external healthcare appointment cannot be kept.</p> <p>The Inspectorate was informed that prisoners returning from hospital are met by the GP within 24 hours of their return. This is in line with a previous recommendation by the OIP following a death in custody in Mountjoy Prison.³</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJ22-12	<p>Shortfalls in the complement of healthcare staffing, particularly in the areas of general practice, nursing, psychology and addiction services, as well as in administrative support for healthcare services, should be immediately addressed, in order to provide better healthcare outcomes for people in Mountjoy Men's Prison.</p> <p>The healthcare team in Mountjoy Men's Prison should also have access, or increased access to, ECG, phlebotomy and physiotherapy services.</p> <p>The inspection team followed up on a number of recommendations made in relation to staffing and resourcing for healthcare. It is positive to note that there is now administrative support for the healthcare team.</p> <p>Currently, there is only one nurse on duty at night, covering Mountjoy Main, Mountjoy West, and the Medical Unit. This creates a serious risk if two or more medical emergencies occur simultaneously. Given the number of prisoners currently held at the prison, the Inspectorate recommends that a second nurse be present at night.</p> <p>At the time of the 2022 inspection, there were three full-time and one part-time addiction counsellors at Mountjoy Prison. During the 2025 inspection, there was just one full-time counsellor in place; however, the Inspectorate was made aware of plans for increased resourcing, with the addition of two full-time counsellors. The implementation of a dedicated addiction nurse post would be of added benefit in supporting prisoners with substance use histories, as well as providing support for the newly re-opened Drug Treatment Programme (see MJ22-13). Staffing for psychology services has remained at approximately the same levels as during the 2022 inspection (see MHT3).</p>

³ Office of the Inspector Of Prisons (2024) Death in Custody Investigation Report – Mr B.

	<p>During its 2022 inspection, the Inspectorate highlighted a number of areas for improvement in relation to equipment and in-reach services. Access to phlebotomy appears to have improved, and the availability of a mobile X-ray unit is welcome. However, there remains no in-reach provision for physiotherapy, as previously recommended.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MHT3	<p>It is recommended that efforts to fill the vacancies for psychology staff across the prison service are redoubled as a high priority, including reconsidering the terms and conditions of the employment of such staff, including enhancing incentives, to try and stem the loss of such staff overseas, and enhance the recruitment and retention of psychologists from home and abroad.</p> <p>Since the 2022 inspection, staffing for psychology services has remained approximately the same (see MJ22-12) although the prison's population has significantly increased. There are currently 113 individuals engaged with psychology. The waiting list for services stands at 394 – which is roughly two-fifths of the prison population. Urgent action is required to reduce this waiting list. In addition, the <i>New Chapters</i> programme is currently not offered to prisoners in Mountjoy West. Given the offence profile of the cohort of men accommodated in Mountjoy West, specialised treatment programmes should be made available in the prison.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MHT5	<p>It is recommended that the consultant psychiatrist input to Mountjoy Men's Prison, is substantially increased. Liaison with the HSE regarding this should occur without delay.</p> <p>It was positive to note that there was an increase in consultant psychiatry input at the prison. Resourcing increased from 0.3 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) at the time of the thematic inspection on psychiatric care to 0.8 FTE during the 2025 follow-up. Resourcing for other psychiatry roles (nursing, registrar, etc.) remained relatively unchanged from the time of the 2022 inspection.</p> <p>This recommendation is closed.</p>
MHT6	<p>It is recommended that the specialist forensic mental health nurse input to Mountjoy Men's Prison is increased by at least 50%. Liaison with the HSE regarding this should occur without delay.</p> <p>Since the Inspectorate's 2023 thematic report on psychiatric care, the Forensic Mental Health Social Work position has become vacant. This vacancy should be filled as soon as possible, as the post holder provides essential supports for vulnerable prisoners on release.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJ22-13	<p>The Drug Treatment Programme formerly provided for in the Medical Unit, should recommence immediately, with a view to ensuring that the environment is conducive to achieving positive outcomes. The capacity of the programme should be expanded, and measures should be taken to ensure the programme is suited to the needs of the people in Mountjoy Men's Prison.</p> <p>The Inspectorate welcomes the re-opening of the Drug Treatment Programme in the Medical Unit. It is also positive to note that there are plans for an additional two counsellors to support the programme and general addiction counselling. As the Drug Treatment Programme evolves, it should include clear and defined progression pathways for people completing the programme.</p>

	<p>Currently, there are nine individuals undertaking the programme; in time, the Inspectorate would welcome plans for the expansion of the programme.</p> <p>The creation of an official addiction nursing post could support the assessment process for the newly opened drug treatment programme, as well as the provision of Opioid Agonist Therapy (referred to as OST by health care staff) in the prison. The post holder could also work to foster links with appropriate community programmes, as part of a prisoner's preparations for release (see MJ22-13).</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJ22-14	<p>The screening programme at Mountjoy Men's Prison should be enhanced including by making provision for it to be adequately resourced by both healthcare and custodial escort staff.</p> <p>Request for Information</p> <p>Appropriate preventive screenings were facilitated including Hepatitis C screening, bowel screening (for over 50s), and prostate screening (by request, or based on symptoms). The Inspectorate would like to receive more information on the implementation of chronic disease management at the prison, to ensure that it is in line with practice in the community.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJ22-15	<p>The use of a temporary Portakabin structure to conduct the health care screening aspect of the committal process should be brought to an end. Healthcare screening should only take place in premises that enable medical confidentiality to be fully respected, which means out of the hearing and, unless the member of health care staff explicitly requests otherwise, out of the sight of prison staff.</p> <p>No Progress</p> <p>At the closeout meeting following our 2022 inspection (and in the inspection report), the Inspectorate recommended that the use of a temporary Portakabin structure to conduct the healthcare screening portion of the committal process should be brought to an end. However, the Portakabin remains in use, despite the fact that it is manifestly unfit for this purpose. Healthcare interviews should only take place in premises that enable medical confidentiality to be fully respected. This shortcoming should be addressed as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>

Purposeful Activity & Resettlement

Rec ID	Purposeful Activity & Resettlement Recommendations
MJ22-16	<p>The Regime Management Plan with respect to Mountjoy Men's Prison should be thoroughly reviewed in order to ensure that <u>prisoner-facing posts that facilitate involvement in purposeful activity are more appropriately prioritised</u>. [See also HQEDWT4]</p> <p>The review of the Mountjoy Regime Management Plan (RMP) offers an opportunity to improve the prioritisation of prisoner-facing posts for example, reduce and eliminate school and gym closures. <i>((Similar issues were observed in relation to other prisoner-facing posts such as the Integrated Sentence Management (ISM) (See Recommendation MJ22-19) and the operation of workshops (See Recommendation MJMEDWT1)).</i></p> <p>The Inspectorate is concerned that cuts to school officer posts are affecting regular school access. Between September 2024-April 2025, the main prison school experienced approximately 34 full closures and 77 partial closures. Access to the library, located in the main prison school, was also impacted by these closures. Furthermore, over the same period, students in the Medical Unit had experienced approximately 24 full school closures and one partial closure. School officer posts should be prioritised to reduce and preferably eliminate closures.⁴</p> <p>Access to the gym is especially important for the physical and mental health of people in prison. Access to gyms were also affected by frequent closures. For example, since 1 January 2025, B gym was closed for 42 full days, D gym closed for 20 full days, Mountjoy West gym closed for 20 full days and 48 full day closures of the gym in the Medical Unit. The Inspectorate would encourage the prioritisation of gym posts to be examined during the upcoming review of the Regime Management Plan (RMP) in order to avoid gym closures.</p> <p>There were very limited work training opportunities available in Mountjoy Prison, including in Mountjoy West (formerly known as the Progression Unit). In total, there were 259 work training positions available in the prison. Of these posts, 125 were essential prisoner roles such as cleaners. Therefore, the total number of work training spaces available cater to just over one quarter (26%) of the current total prisoner population.⁵</p> <p>There were only two workshops in the prison: fabric (main prison) and industrial cleaning (Mountjoy West) in the prison. The fabric workshop had been closed for 19 days over the period of 21/12/24 to 22/03/25. The industrial cleaning workshop was closed at the time of inspection, awaiting the appointment of a Work Training Officer.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>

⁴ The Department of Education Inspectorate assessed the quality of educational provision in the main prison school. These findings have been shared directly with the Head Teacher at Mountjoy Prison and the assessment is appended to this report.

⁵ On 28 April 2025, the total prisoner population of Mountjoy Prison was 986.

MJMEDWT1 (Partially Accepted)	<p>MAIN PRISON: The Governor of Mountjoy Prison should adopt measures as a matter of urgency to <u>increase access to purposeful activity</u>, including work training for prisoners on protection and prisoners in the Medical Unit.</p> <p>Overall, the Inspectorate found there was limited access to purposeful activity for prisoners on protection and prisoners on the Medical Unit. With the exception of essential work training positions such as class cleaners or painters, there was no work training activity available to men on protection or in the Medical Unit.</p> <p>A very welcome development since the 2022 inspection is that the men living in the Medical Unit can now attend school and there is a computer workshop available to them. The school timetable in the main prison had also been revised to accommodate the number of protection prisoners attending classes. However, school access has been impacted by closures (see Inspectorate recommendation MJ22-16).</p> <p>There is a need for increased access to purposeful activity including work training for men on protection and men accommodated in the Medical Unit. The Inspectorate is supportive of plans in train by the prison for a new insulation workshop for men on protection in the main prison, as well as plans to develop work training facilities (including a horticultural area and a multi-purpose room) for men accommodated in the Medical Unit.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJMEDWT2 (Partially Accepted)	<p>MAIN PRISON: The Governor of Mountjoy Prison should take all necessary action to guarantee that all prisoners, in particular prisoners on protection, are provided with an absolute minimum of five hours of purposeful activity for five days per week, in line with Rule 27(3) of the Prison Rules 2007-2020. Mountjoy Prison should work towards the CPT's recommended minimum eight hours out-of-cell time for prisoners engaged in purposeful activities.</p> <p>People on protection are currently not provided with a minimum of five hours daily purposeful activity; their activities being limited to some access to school, recreation, yard, and the gym. However, access to these activities were often curtailed by school closures and cuts to allocated time slots in the school (e.g. protection prisoners were scheduled to attend school at 9.30am, however often protection prisoners were not escorted to the school until 9.50am). In addition, there were limited purposeful activities to avail of in recreation areas and yards. For example, there were few facilities for prisoners in the recreation area on A Division. The prison yards for protection prisoners also require improvements such as the introduction of green spaces, murals, and other amenities.</p> <p>In principle, prisoners on protection were offered a total of between three and four hours daily out of cell time. An analysis of real out-of-cell time for men on protection accommodated on B1 landing found that the average time spent out-of-cell per day was less than two hours (111 minutes).⁶ The highest daily average for out-of-cell time was 207 minutes, and the lowest was just 45 minutes. The Inspectorate encourages Mountjoy Prison to pursue its efforts to increase out of cell time for prisoners on protection.</p>

⁶ Analysis of out of cell time between 21/04/2025 and 25/04/2025, for 34 individuals who were present on the landing for all five days.

	<p>Additionally, at the time of the 2025 inspection, 11 people living on B1 landing declined to engage in purposeful activity on three or more days a week; on such days, they did not leave their cells, with the exception of a small amount of allotted time (30-45 minutes) to clean them. Their reasons for declining out of cell time are currently not being recorded; recording the reasons for this would assist in monitoring and offering support to people who are repeatedly declining out of cell time.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJPUEDWT3 (Accepted)	<p>MOUNTJOY WEST (formerly PROGRESSION UNIT): In line with Rule 110 of the Prison Rules 2007-2020, the Mountjoy Prison Governor should ensure that all prisoners in the Progression Unit are able to access library services on a consistent basis.</p> <p>The Inspectorate notes that the library in Mountjoy West has been closed since 15 January 2025. It is important that the library be made available to the people accommodated there, even more so given the paucity of the indoor communal spaces available to men at Mountjoy West. In line with Rule 110 (7) of the Prison Rules, 2007, steps should be taken to ensure that all prisoners at Mountjoy West have consistent access to a library facility.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJMEDWT3 (Partially Accepted)	<p>MAIN PRISON: As recommended by the OIP in 2021, and in line with Rule 110 of the Prison Rules 2007-2020, the Governor of Mountjoy Prison should ensure the library is consistently open, and that prisoners who do not attend school are facilitated to access library services on a consistent basis.</p> <p>The library in the main prison is located in the school and is also being used as a classroom, which limits its availability as a library. In addition, due to the frequency of school closures, the library is not consistently open. While prisoners working as library assistants provide a service on B, C and D Divisions; there is no library assistant for A Division; having a library assistant would help ensure that those who do not go to the school (who have no opportunity to visit the library) have the opportunity to request materials from the library.</p> <p>In line with Rule 110 (7) of the Prison Rules, 2007, steps should be taken to ensure that all prisoners at Mountjoy Prison have consistent access to a library facility.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>

MJPUEDWT2 (Partially Accepted)	<p>MOUNTJOY WEST (formerly PROGRESSION UNIT): A formal selection process that systematically and strategically identifies opportunities for work training certification should be adopted by the Governor of the Prison. This should ensure rotational engagement with work training for those prisoners who would like to engage, and should be targeted to all prisoners regardless of sentence length. This process should be clearly communicated to prisoners.</p>
MJMEDWT5 (Partially Accepted)	<p>MAIN PRISON: A formal selection process that systematically and strategically identifies opportunities for work training certification should be adopted by the Governor of Mountjoy Prison. This should ensure equality of opportunity for prisoners with rotational engagement for those prisoners who would like to engage with work training, and should be targeted to all prisoners regardless of protection status.</p> <p>There was no formal selection process for prisoners to engage in work training. It would be beneficial to incorporate a formal selection process, this might be achieved through the development of a work training policy.</p> <p>With the exception of manual handling, food safety and the driving simulator course, there were no opportunities for men to avail of work training certification. Additional work training certification possibilities should be created and certification should be considered as part of the planning and development of future work training initiatives.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJPUEDWT1 (Accepted)	<p>MOUNTJOY WEST (formerly PROGRESSION UNIT): In line with Rule 111 of the Prison Rules 2007-2020, the Governor of Mountjoy Prison should ensure that all prisoners in Mountjoy West (formerly Progression Unit) have access to a structured programme of training.</p> <p>There was no structured training programme in place in Mountjoy West. The Inspectorate welcomes future training plans such as the introduction of a Men's Shed.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJPUEDWT4 (Partially Accepted)	<p>MOUNTJOY WEST (formerly PROGRESSION UNIT): The Mountjoy Prison Governor should expand work training activity and ensure the option of accredited certification is available for people in custody in Mountjoy West (formerly Progression Unit), with a particular focus on people who do not already have a certification and/or vocational experience.</p> <p>Since the 2022 inspection, the profile of the cohort at Mountjoy West has changed. Vocational training and certification should remain a particular focus for the people accommodated there.</p> <p>Overall, with the exception of certification for manual handling, safety and the driving simulator course, there are no opportunities for men to avail of certification in work training which would support them upon their release. It would be beneficial to incorporate certification as part of the planning and development of future work training in the prison.</p> <p>The lack of work training opportunities across the prison creates an additional barrier to target particular cohorts such as those without vocational experience or certification. The Inspectorate welcomes plans to introduce a Men's Shed at Mountjoy West.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>

MJMEDWT4 (Partially Accepted)	<p>MAIN PRISON: The Governor of Mountjoy Prison should ensure facilitation of certification for prisoners in all work training activities, with particular focus on protection prisoners and prisoners in the Medical Unit who have little to no opportunity to access and achieve vocational certification.</p> <p>With the exception of work training positions on the landings such as class cleaners and painters, men on protection and men in the Medical Unit had no work training opportunities available to them. The Inspectorate learned of, and is supportive of plans for a new workshop specifically planned to target men on protection in the main prison, as well as plans for work training facilities (including a multi-purpose room and horticulture (for men in the Medical Unit. It would be beneficial to incorporate certification as part of the planning and development of future work training in the prison.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJMEDWT6 (Partially Accepted. Prison response states there are no plans to remove W&T activities)	<p>MAIN PRISON: In line with Rule 111 of the Prison Rules 2007-2020, the Governor of Mountjoy Prison should ensure that prisoners have access to a programme of training. Given the intention to remove work training, aside from essential work, from the prison, Mountjoy Prison should proactively identify and implement opportunities for sustainable work training initiatives to be brought into the prison through external community engagement and through collaboration with the school.</p> <p>There were some positive examples of sustained collaboration between the school and work training. This included the barista training course in the main prison and the horticulture polytunnel in Mountjoy West. With the exception of the driving simulator course, there were limited opportunities for community engagement in work training. Mountjoy Prison should endeavour to foster a higher level of community engagement in work training activity.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>

MJ22-17

The Governor of Mountjoy Men's Prison must ensure that all prisoners, irrespective of their regime status should have access to, at minimum, one-hour outdoor exercise in accordance with Rule 32(1) of the Prison Rules 2007-2020. This includes the re-opening of the large yard for protection prisoners on B-wing. The Governor must also ensure regular, frequent and equitable access to gym equipment for prisoners.

Protection prisoners were timetabled for a minimum of one-hour daily access to the yard. One of the large protection yards has been split into three which facilitated access to outdoor exercise for protection groups.

However, there was no gym or exercise equipment contained in protection yards. Prisoners on protection had access to gym equipment in the gym; however, access to the gym was not always regular due to gym closures. It is positive that a new gym will open for men on protection in A Division. Given gym closures we trust that the revision of the Regime Management Plan will include a reprioritisation that enables the gyms to be consistently kept open.

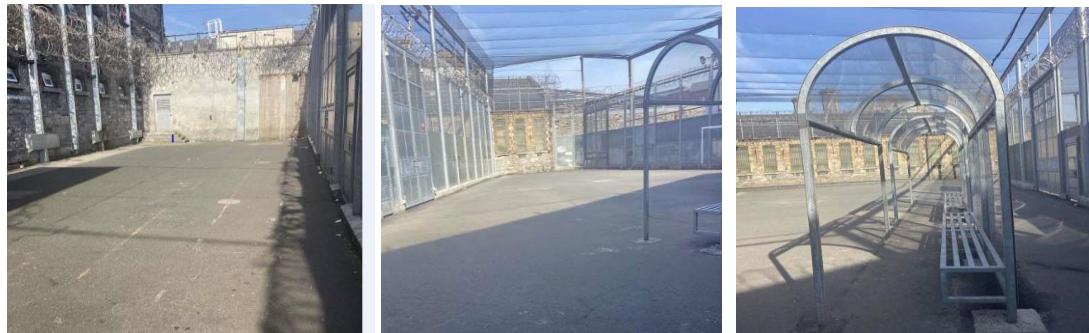


Figure 5: Yards for protection prisoners

This recommendation remains open.

MJ22-18	<p>The Governor of Mountjoy Men's Prison should improve the environment, including green space and cleanliness, and amenities available in yards and recreation areas across Mountjoy Men's Prison. Efforts made to improve conditions should be made in consultation with prisoners and prison staff.</p> <p>There were no green spaces in the yards visited. The addition of a mural to the yard in the Medical Unit had improved the space, but most of the other yards were grey and bleak, and some yards contained no shelter or seating.</p> <p>Positive examples of decoration and gym equipment should be replicated in yards throughout the prison.</p>  <p>Figure 6: Mural in yard of the Medical Unit</p> <p>Indoor recreation areas also required improvement. The recreation area on A Division offered few activities for prisoners. People living in C Division in the main prison and C in Mountjoy West had no access to indoor recreation areas.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>
MJ22-19	<p>In line with Rule 75(6) of the Prison Rules 2007-2020, the Governor of Mountjoy Men's Prison, and all operational and service staff, should coordinate to ensure the timely and effective preparation and implementation of prisoner sentence and community reintegration plans.</p> <p>The inspection team examined the implementation of sentence management plans. There were only three Integrated Sentence Management (ISM) officers to cater for Mountjoy prison; this number was unchanged since the general inspection 2022 despite the explosion in the prisoner population. While Community Integration Plans (CIP) were generally up-to-date, there were approximately 213 men in main Mountjoy prison, 59 men in Mountjoy West, and six men in the Medical Unit who were waiting for a Personal Implementation Plan (PIP). The Inspectorate considers that ISM posts should be ring-fenced in the new Regime Management Plan in order to ensure that all eligible prisoners benefit from a Personal Implementation Plan.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>



Department of Education Inspectorate Follow-Through Report: Mountjoy Men's Prison

Findings on progress made on recommendations

1. More frequent and reliable access to the school should be facilitated to improve learning outcomes for students. The day-to-day support required for the school to function well and increased accommodation to allow the students to have appropriate access to school should be provided as a matter of urgency.

Very good progress

Leaders and teachers have made very good progress in improving students' access to education. The education centre has undergone extensive refurbishment, resulting in a clean, safe, and well-equipped environment conducive to learning.

Revised timetabling has increased student-teacher contact time, with more students, including those under protection regimes, accessing structured, purposeful learning activities. Education is now available to students in the Medical Unit, and a wider range of curricular options is offered including Art, Pyrography, Computers and Mindfulness. Attendance data examined during the inspection indicates a rise in student participation.

The recently appointed Head Teacher provides effective leadership, promoting a culture of improvement and reflection. While prison management has been generally supportive, some operational challenges remain. These include the inconsistent assignment of dedicated officers and limited teacher access to the centre prior to lessons.

The absence of sufficient full-time designated school officers continues to impact provision. Ongoing full and partial closures reduce instructional time and disrupt learning continuity. There is scope for senior prison management and the Head Teacher to improve consistency in staffing and ensure reliable access to the education centre for both staff and students.

2. The outreach programme designed by the teachers to provide essential literacy support to those in most need of it, should be put in place as a matter of priority.

Partial Progress

The outreach programme has not been implemented. However, some progress has been made in improving literacy support to those in most need of it.

Following the inspection, school leaders and teachers reviewed practice to ensure the provision of essential literacy support to those in most need of it. They have made notable progress in supporting learners with the greatest literacy needs. A comprehensive bank of assessment tools has been developed, and teacher-designed literacy and numeracy assessments have been used to inform tailored learning programmes including ESOL. A collaborative literacy plan has been established, promoting an integrated approach to literacy instruction.

3. The viewing of blended learning videos on the in-cell TV channel and provision of teacher support with the associated learning materials should be facilitated. Consideration should be given to allowing the use of digital devices with blended learning pre-loaded for students to use in their cells.

Partial progress

Teachers have developed a high-quality suite of blended learning materials, including educational videos, bespoke resources, and course booklets offering a wide range of subject areas. However, the use of these resources by students remains limited due to restricted access to in-cell TV and shared screen use, resulting in low uptake.

Although digital devices have been procured, they have not yet been approved for use within the education centre. This significantly limits access for students unable to attend in person.

The process of implementing the recommendations

School leaders and staff engaged proactively with the inspection recommendations. The newly appointed Head Teacher, in partnership with IPS and prison management, has helped to create a safe, clean, and supportive learning environment. Timetables have been revised to improve student access, and targeted literacy and numeracy supports have been introduced. School leaders have collaborated effectively with teaching staff, engaged in professional learning and networked with peers to drive continuous improvement.

Recommendations

- **Prison management and school leaders should increase the number of dedicated school officers and ensure timely access to the education centre for both staff and students.**
- **The Irish Prison Service (IPS), prison management, and City of Dublin ETB should continue to collaborate to enable the effective use of existing digital resources in support of prisoner education.**

Appendix: OIP Press Release on Mountjoy Follow-Up Inspection

Prison Watchdog Returns to Mountjoy

Dublin, 2 May 2025

Ireland's statutory prisons watchdog, the Office of the Inspector of Prisons (OIP), has today (Friday 2 May 2025) completed an unannounced follow-up inspection of Mountjoy Prison, Dublin. The Inspectorate's 5-day visit concluded with a formal meeting at which the Inspectorate shared its preliminary findings with senior staff.

The main purpose of this inspection was to follow up on recommendations made in its report on the unannounced general inspection of Mountjoy Prison carried out by the Inspectorate from 28 November to 9 December 2022 (*).

Speaking after the follow-up inspection, Chief Inspector Mr Mark Kelly said:

"The Inspectorate has once again found that many prison staff at Mountjoy Prison make considerable efforts to engage positively with the people in their custody. We also welcome the improvements that have been made to the physical fabric of some areas of this historic building."

"However, the level of overcrowding in the prison is even worse than during the last inspection. In November/December 2022, there were 750 people in custody at Mountjoy; the prison was operating at 99% capacity, and there were 35 people on mattresses on the floor of single cells. On the first day of this inspection, this had risen to 986 people in custody, with 90 people on mattresses on the floor and more than 200 people on bunks beds in small cells designed for single occupancy."

"The living conditions for many prisoners held two to a single cell in Mountjoy Prison are deplorable and, at least in some cases, their conditions of detention can be characterised as inhuman and degrading".

The follow-up inspection visit was carried out by:

- Mark Kelly, Chief Inspector
- Michelle Martyn, Lead Inspector
- Laura Anderson, Inspector
- Matthew Butterly, Inspector
- Dr. Sarah Curristan, Inspector
- Orla Dick, Inspector

The Inspectorate of Prisons was assisted by Yvonne Ní Mhurchu and Caroline O'Shea, from the Department of Education Inspectorate. (**)

Notes to the Editor

The Office of the Inspector of Prisons is a statutory body, independent in how it carries out its work, set up under the Prisons Act 2007.

The law underpinning the role of Chief Inspector of Prisons is set out in Part 5, Sections 30 to 32 of the Prisons Act 2007. Section 30 provides for the appointment of the Chief Inspector, Section 31 sets out the functions of the Chief Inspector and Section 32 specifies the requirement to submit an Annual Report to the Minister for Justice, by 31 March in any year. The Inspectorate's Annual Report for 2024 was submitted to the Minister on 31 March 2025. Section 32(3) of the Act provides that, "as soon as practicable" after receiving the Annual Report, the Minister for Justice shall "cause a copy of it to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas and to be published".

Under Section 31 of the Act, the Chief Inspector of Prisons is obliged to carry out regular inspections of prisons and for this purpose may: at any time enter any prison or any part of a prison, request and obtain from the Governor a copy of any books, records, other documents or extracts from such documents, and, in the course of an inspection or arising out of an inspection bring any issues of concern to the notice of the governor of the prison concerned, the Director General of the Irish Prison Service or the Minister as the Chief Inspector considers appropriate.

The Chief Inspector may, and must if he receives a request from the Minister, investigate any matter arising out of the management or operation of a prison and shall submit to the Minister a report on any such investigation.

Governors, prison officers, other persons employed in prisons and prisoners, must as far as reasonably practicable, comply with any request for information that the Chief Inspector may make in the performance of his functions.

Since 2012, the Chief Inspector has also been obliged to investigate the circumstances of all deaths in custody and those within one month of temporary release from custody.

In addition to the legislative authority derived from the Act, the Chief Inspector has specified functions under Prison Rules 2007-2013 in relation to the Irish Prison Service Prisoner Complaints Procedure (Rule 57B) and letters from prisoners (Rule 44 (1) (h)).

It is anticipated that, in the near future, the Inspectorate will become the Inspectorate of Places of Detention, with an expanded remit as the National Preventive Mechanism for the Justice sector under the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture (OPCAT).

(*) The Inspectorate's report on its unannounced general inspection of Mountjoy Prison from 28 November to 9 December 2022 has been submitted to the Minister for Justice. Publication of the Inspectorate's reports is a matter for the Minister.

(**) The OIP has concluded a Memorandum of Agreement with the Inspectorate of the Department of Education, enabling it to benefit from the expertise of colleagues from that Inspectorate when assessing educational provision in prisons.

For further information, please see: www.oip.ie

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