EXPLORING VALUES AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PRISONERS AND STAFF IN THE IRISH PRISON SERVICE

Presented By:

Michael Donnellan and Martin O’Neill
4044* prisoners
3420 staff (including HQ)
€308.5 million budget
14 prisons

89** prisoners per 100,000 of national population.

* 30th April 2014

** International Centre for Prison Studies
http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/ireland-republic
New Strategic approach:

- Reducing prisoner numbers
- Inter-agency working
- Prisoner progression
- Prisoner programmes
- Management and Staffing

Culture change/shift
Main Question:
What values matter to prisoners and staff within the Irish Prison System?

Sub Questions:
1. How do prisoners feel they are treated by staff and management.
3. How do staff feel they are treated by the organisation and the people above them.
4. What is staff’s orientation towards prisoners, is it rehabilitative or punitive.
Combined mixed methods research using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

**Quantitative:**
MQPL and SQL surveys which have been reviewed and adapted to suit the Irish system. Random selection of prisoners. Staff surveys delivered at organised staff meeting.

**Qualitative:**
Focus group discussions in some or all of the seven selected sites using appreciative questions.

Large scale project involving seven prisons.

Developed and trained a team of four data collection assistants.
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- Presentation to IPS Governors and Directors
- Advertising campaign - posters and information leaflets
- Letters of invitation to prisoners - randomly selected for participation in the project
- Letters to the head of function of all service providers and agency staff
- Red Cross Volunteers
A pilot research programme
Measuring the Quality of Prison Life for prisoners

- Courtesy
- Help
- Decency
- Family contact
- Personal development
- Safety
- Fairness
- Well being

An Irish Prison Service project - Managed by Martin O'Neill under the supervision of the University of Cambridge.
50% of our prisons surveyed

Significant take up and response from both:

• prisoners and
• staff
Table 1.1 – Prisoners – Strongest negative emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Q No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>To get things done in this prison you have to ask and ask and ask</td>
<td>Organisation and consistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>Drugs cause a lot of problems between prisoners in here</td>
<td>Drugs and exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>The best way to do your time here is to mind your own business and have as little to do with other prisoners as possible</td>
<td>Stand Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>Prisoners spend too long locked up in their cells in this prison</td>
<td>Decency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>The length of time for each visit is long enough</td>
<td>Family contact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA – strongly agree, SD – strongly disagree
Table 1.2 – Prisoners – Strongest positive evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Q No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>I have thoughts about suicide in this prison</td>
<td>Distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>I am given adequate opportunity to keep myself clean and decent</td>
<td>Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>The best way to get things done in here is to be polite and go through official channels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff professionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>I have no difficulties with other prisoners in here</td>
<td>Prisoner Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>I am given adequate opportunity to keep my living area clean and decent</td>
<td>Conditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA – strongly agree, SD – strongly disagree
### Results - Staff

Table 2.1 – Staff – Strongest negative emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Q No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>Staff need more training and support in dealing with the effects on them of suicide and self harm</td>
<td>Stand Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>Dealing with suicide and self harm by prisoners is extremely stressful</td>
<td>Stand Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>The P.19 system in this prison does not teach prisoners anything</td>
<td>Punishment and discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>I trust prisoners in this prison</td>
<td>Positive attitude towards prisoners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>Some staff get away with coasting in this prison</td>
<td>Stand alone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA – strongly agree, SD – strongly disagree
## Table 2.2 – Staff - Strongest positive evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Q No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>I feel a sense of loyalty to colleagues in this prison</td>
<td>Relationships with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>I am willing to work hard to meet goals and targets</td>
<td>Involvement and motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>The prison has the right kind of Governor for current needs</td>
<td>Attitude towards the Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>Officers should be involved in rehabilitation programmes</td>
<td>Stand alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>I trust colleagues in this prison</td>
<td>Relationships with peers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA – strongly agree, SD – strongly disagree
OVERALL MQPL RESULTS - ALL PRISONS SURVEYED

Neutral mark vs. All Prisons

- Entry into Custody
- Respect/courtesy
- Staff-prisoner relationships
- Humanity
- Decency
- Care for the vulnerable
- Help and assistance
- Staff professionalism
- Bureaucratic legitimacy
- Fairness
- Organisation and consistency
- Policing and security
- Prisoner safety
- Prisoner adaptation
- Drugs and exploitation
- Conditions
- Family contact
- Personal development
- Personal autonomy
- Wellbeing
- Distress
MQPL RESULTS - INDIVIDUAL PRISONS

![Graph showing MQPL results for individual prisons.](image-url)

- Neutral mark
- Prison A
- Prison B
- Prison C

**Axes:**
- Horizontal: MQPL categories (Entry into Custody, Respect/courtesy, Staff-prisoner relationships, etc.)
- Vertical: Rating scale (1 to 5)

**Legend:**
- Yellow: Neutral mark
- Brown: Prison A
- Pink: Prison B
- Blue: Prison C
Table 3 – Staff perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Discipline Staff</th>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Discipline staff</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>% SA/A</td>
<td>% N</td>
<td>% SA/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rq13</td>
<td>I trust the IPS</td>
<td>2.40*</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rq23</td>
<td>I am valued as a member of staff by IPS</td>
<td>2.64*</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rq92</td>
<td>I feel a sense of identity with the goals and objectives of IPS</td>
<td>2.82*</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rq16</td>
<td>I am trusted by IPS</td>
<td>2.94*</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rq40</td>
<td>I am treated fairly by IPS</td>
<td>2.99*</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Relationship with the Organisation</strong></td>
<td>2.76*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- *Significant difference p<0.05, ** Significant difference p<0.01, *** significant difference p<0.001

A – agree, SA – strongly agree, D – disagree, SD – strongly disagree
CONCLUSIONS

Prisoners Values
Family contact
Fairness and consistency of approach
Being Heard and treated as equals
No say in relation to their sentence
Trapped in the system
Entry into Custody – alone and scared
Out of cell time – could be increased
Drugs and exploitation an issue
Bullying
Prisoner - staff relations generally good
Impact of suicide and self harm by prisoners
Relationship with the organisation - negative
Banter important as a coping mechanism
Felt unrecognised for the work they do
Relationships with colleagues
Stress an issue
Staff punitiveness $M = 2.66$
Staff punitive in some locations
Staff – Prisoner relations good overall
Wanted to be more involved in IPS Developments
Reports for all prisons by year end
Global report
Bi-annual surveys

Implications for our:
Strategy?
Policy?
Staff Training?
Dignity at Work Policy – 5 Pillars

- Conduct and Ethics
  (Respectful Behaviour)
- Communications and Consultation
  (Open Behaviour)
- Staff Support
  (Supportive Behaviour)
- Equality and Diversity
  (Fair & Inclusive Behaviour)
- Professional Development & Training
  (Competent Behaviour)
Using data to change culture??????

QUESTIONS?
FOR MORE INFORMATION

...please visit our website at www.irishprisons.ie