

CJI daredevils raise money for NI Hospice

Four members of staff from CJI tested their head for heights on Sunday 19 September 2010 to raise money for the NI Hospice.

Chief Inspector Dr. Michael Maguire, and Inspectors Rachel Lindsay, Bill Priestley and Derek Williamson took up the challenge for CJI and abseiled down the front of the Europa Hotel along with many other individuals fundraising for the NI Hospice and NI Children's Hospice.

Over 50 people in total took part in the abseil.

The CJI team was delighted to raise £1,685.00 for this valuable charity. In addition, over £460.00 was reclaimed in Gift Aid by the hospice making a massive fundraising total of over **£2,145.00**, which went a significant way towards helping the hospice exceed its £5,000.00 target by a massive £2,000.00. Every £100.00 raised will fund a night of hospice care for a patient.

The NI Hospice is a local charity caring for local people. The adult hospice is based at Somerton House, Somerton Road, Belfast and the children's hospice at Horizon House, O'Neill Road, Newtownabbey.

Each year they care for over 3,000 adults, children and young



Members of CJI staff who took part in the charity abseil were (from left) Bill Priestley, Dr. Michael Maguire, Rachel Lindsay and Derek Williamson.

people with life-limiting and life threatening conditions. The NI Hospice also supports their families and carers. Care is provided in the hospice as well as in the community and is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Although the hospice does receive some funding from government, they still rely heavily on voluntary donations and legacies to fund their much needed services.

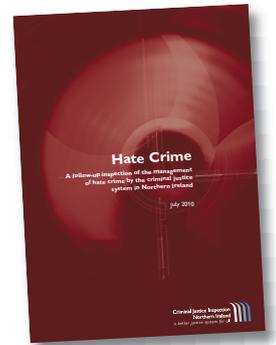
Fortunately, for the CJI team, the day of the abseil was dry and bright and not too windy, which provided

perfect conditions for abseiling. After a safety briefing, being kitted out in a harness, helmet and gloves and a practice session, the daunting task of stepping over the edge beckoned.

The abseiling quartet was supported by colleagues, family and friends who watched from the opposite side of Great Victoria Street.

Following the fundraising effort, CJI received a certificate from the NI Hospice recognising its fundraising contribution. ■

Criminal Justice system must continue to focus on hate crime



In July this year, CJI published the findings of its follow-up inspection of how hate crime is managed by the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland.

The review found that in the three years since CJI's initial inspection, 12 of the 19 recommendations made by the Inspectorate had been fully achieved.

CJI welcomed the work that had been undertaken across the criminal justice system to fully complete these recommendations, and commended the Police Service of Northern Ireland for achieving the five inspection recommendations it had specific responsibility for.

"During the inspection review Inspectors found some excellent examples of criminal justice agencies, government departments, public bodies and other groups working together to improve the management of hate crime," said Brendan

McGuigan, Deputy Chief Inspector with Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland.

Examples of joined up working between the agencies included the establishment of a tension monitoring group within Belfast Community Safety Partnership to identify potential or actual tensions within communities and the *Unite against Hate* campaign, which brings together a range of sporting organisations and local personalities, to raise awareness of hate crime, encourage reporting and challenge attitudes.

Inspectors were disappointed to find that progress on a common definition of what a hate crime was, had been slower than expected and a number of key recommendations had not been achieved.

CJI indicated this absence of strategic focus was concerning as it had the potential to undermine the progress made since 2007 to reach out to minority groups and victims of hate crime.

As part of on-going work to strengthen how the criminal justice system handles incidents of hate crime, CJI urged the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland to ensure that where evidence exists, all incidents of hate crime are prominently marked on prosecution files and this information is brought to the attention of the court.

Inspectors also encouraged the criminal justice system to implement a process where the use of hate crime legislation can be monitored.

In conclusion, Mr. McGuigan stressed the need for agencies to work co-operatively to tackle incidents of hate crime in a holistic way.

"While recorded hate crimes may represent less than two per cent of all recorded crime in Northern Ireland, Inspectors believe hate incidents will continue to provoke public outrage. It is therefore vital the criminal justice system reacts to such incidents in a proactive and timely manner," he said. ■

A word from the Chief Inspector

Welcome to 2011 and a Happy New Year to all readers of The Spec. This edition of The Spec casts an eye over what the organisation has been doing over the last number of months. 2010 has been a busy year for CJI as we completed 23 separate pieces of work involving 10 justice organisations.

The past 12 months has seen a greater focus on thematic reviews that have allowed us to take a wider view of the performance of the justice system – particularly from the perspective of the victims and witness as they progress between the different justice organisations.

Fifty per cent of our inspections have been reviews of this type and included work on the important topics of reducing avoidable delay across the justice system, sexual violence, domestic abuse and enforcement of fines.

Looking to the future, the financial climate remains uncertain as organisations, including CJI, adjust to changes in budgetary arrangements. This will create a need for innovation in the ways in which services are delivered as expectations will remain high of the justice system, irrespective of any finance changes.

In 2010, we were able to report on a number of improvements across the justice organisations since the publication of previous inspection reports. Follow-Up Reviews are an important part of the inspection regime and provide a useful basis on which to bank the progress that has been made.

Once again, Happy New Year to all.

Dr Michael Maguire

Victims and witnesses stories to help make a difference to the experience of others

Victims and witnesses of crime were urged to use their voice to help improve how others are treated in the future as part of CJI's inspection into the treatment of victims and witnesses of crime.

The inspection, which is being led for CJI by Derek Williamson, commenced in September 2010. As part of the fieldwork CJI launched a six-week confidential survey to provide victims and witnesses of crime with an opportunity to share their experiences.

"CJI felt it was important to hear directly from victims and witnesses as part of this inspection in order to firmly establish the key issues," said Derek.

"We felt it was critical to provide an opportunity for anyone who wished to engage with the Inspectorate on this topic to do so. This is why we launched our public survey on 20 September and publicised it in the three main daily newspapers," he added.

The survey was also displayed prominently on the CJI website.

Speaking after the survey concluded Derek said: "The survey has provided

an opportunity for CJI to collate the first-hand experiences of victims and witnesses of crime whether they were positive or negative.

"I am delighted with the response we have received from the public to the confidential survey. We have heard from a wide range of victims and witnesses who have shared their story in terms of their involvement with the police, the prosecution service or the courts."

CJI's victims and witnesses survey was supported by Victim Support Northern Ireland and a number of other voluntary and community sector bodies, all of whom provided invaluable assistance.

"Victim Support Northern Ireland were among those who helped CJI by raising awareness of the survey among victims of crime and they have also been on hand to provide support to anyone who found the process of completing the survey to be upsetting," said Derek.

"I would pass on my thanks to Susan Reid, Chief Executive of Victim



Susan Reid, Chief Executive VSNI and Inspector Derek Williamson.

Support, her staff, and those voluntary and community sector bodies for their help with the survey.

"I would also wish to thank all the victims and witnesses who took the time to participate and fill in the questionnaire in order to improve the experience of others in the future," he added.

Information collected as a result of the survey has been examined as part of the inspection fieldwork. The results may assist the Inspectorate in making recommendations which will improve how victims and witnesses are treated.

It is envisaged the report will be published in 2011. ■

Stakeholder Conference 2011 set to explore oversight and accountability



CJI is due to explore the issue of oversight and accountability at its 2011 Stakeholder Conference.

The conference, which has become one of the must attend events within the criminal justice calendar, will take place on Wednesday 19 January 2011 at the Stormont Hotel, Belfast.

"This conference will bring together a number of high profile political representatives from the Committee for Justice and members of the media to discuss the issue of oversight and accountability," said CJI's Chief Inspector Dr. Michael Maguire.

In an effort to respond positively to delegate feedback from previous events, the conference will be more interactive and incorporate more discussion sessions than ever before.

"We hope that this half-day event will provide a unique opportunity for delegates to explore in greater depth the challenges facing justice and policing since devolution," he said.

Dr. Maguire added that CJI was receiving a substantial number of responses from delegates indicating their desire to attend the event once again.

"We are delighted that representatives from across the criminal justice organisations and members of the voluntary and community sector who engage with the criminal justice system are keen to attend, and we look forward to seeing everyone on the day," added Dr. Maguire.

The event will commence at 9.30am and conclude at 2.30pm with a light lunch provided.

Following the conference CJI will be producing a special edition of The Spec dedicated to the conference proceedings. ■

The Committee for Justice: local accountability in action

The devolution of policing and justice matters in April 2010 heralded the start of a new era for the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland.

For the first time, a Committee for Justice has been formed and in its first six months the Committee has played an active role in overseeing the workings of the justice system and holding the various criminal justice agencies to account.

CJI sees the establishment and operation of the Committee for Justice as the final piece of the accountability jigsaw. The Inspectorate welcomes the interest committee members have shown to date in its inspection reports, its recommendations for improvement and its future work programme.

CJI first appeared before the Committee in May 2010 when Dr. Michael Maguire and Brendan McGuigan gave an introductory briefing in the Senate chamber on CJI and its work before participating in a lively question and answer session with members of the Committee.

This initial meeting led to CJI receiving two additional invitations to give evidence on significant reports: the inspection of avoidable delay (16 September) and more recently, CJI's report on the handling of sexual abuse and violence cases (21 October).

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/committees2010/Justice/100916/BriefingonCriminalJusticeInspection.htm>.

Following the CJI presentation the Committee heard from representatives of the PSNI, the PPS, the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service and the Department of Justice about the actions being taken by the criminal justice system in response to the CJI Avoidable Delay report.

A transcript of their evidence to the Committee for Justice can be found at: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/committees2010/Justice/100916/BriefingonCriminalJusticeInspection.htm>.

Sexual Violence and Abuse



In October, CJI returned to Parliament Buildings to speak to members of the Committee for Justice about its report on the handling of sexual violence and abuse cases which was published in July 2010.

The inspection was led on behalf of CJI by Rachel Lindsay who looked at the joint NIO/DHSSPS five-year regional strategy for tackling sexual violence, and examined the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in responding to and the handling of cases of sexual violence.

The inspection report considered the different stages of the justice process from the initial reporting of a crime, through its investigation, prosecution and eventual court disposal.

Avoidable Delay



During the evidence session on *Avoidable Delay*, Dr. Maguire provided an overview on the findings of the report. He indicated that the initial response in the criminal justice system to the

Inspectorate's original 2006 report had been positive.

An avoidable delay strategy was developed and range of actions to improve performance were identified, including the setting up of a Delay Action Team to support the work of the Criminal Justice Board on targets.

However, Dr. Maguire indicated that despite the major effort to deal with the problem of delay there had been limited improvements in the time taken to process criminal cases. He told the Committee that avoidable delay remains a significant challenge

for criminal justice agencies which impacted substantially on victims and witnesses.

Dr. Maguire, Brendan McGuigan and Lead Inspector James Corrigan then responded to a range of questions posed by Committee members. They included what the Inspectorate felt needed to be done differently, the reasons behind why high numbers of court cases where adjourned and issues around case progression and ownership.

The Chief Inspector and his colleagues were asked for their views on how the criminal justice agencies and system had responded to the initial inspection recommendations and the impact delay could have on particular groups such as young people and those on remand.

A full transcript of the evidence session can be downloaded from the NI Assembly website:

During the briefing the CJI team addressed issues such as the difficulties and complexities involved in successfully investigating and prosecuting crimes of sexual violence, which include rape and sexual abuse.

They also discussed the role of the various criminal justice agencies and the importance of ensuring that victims were kept informed and their needs were central throughout the process.

Dr. Maguire informed Committee members that the inspection had identified some excellent examples of good practice within the justice system, and that Inspectors found many examples of dedicated staff throughout the system working with victims in a professional and sensitive manner.

During a subsequent question and answer session, members of the Committee for Justice queried the complex reasons behind the low conviction rates for sexual offences and the barriers that may exist.

They sought further information around the impact delay could have on cases involving sexual offences and what could be done to improve the level of communication between the various justice agencies and victims.

Committee members took the opportunity to explore the issue of whether specialist prosecutors would assist in sexual cases and discussed the issues around under reporting of cases of this type.

Representatives of the various criminal justice agencies were also in attendance to give evidence and answer questions from the Committee for Justice following the end of the CJI session.

A full transcript of both evidence sessions can be accessed via the NI Assembly website: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/committees2010/hansard_justice.htm. ■

Update on Inspection Reviews

As part of its on-going work to track progress on inspection recommendations, CJI recently published two follow-up reviews of the investigative section of the Royal Mail Group in Northern Ireland and the work of Belfast Harbour Police.

In this edition of The Spec, Bill Priestley outlines the key findings of both reviews.

Royal Mail Group

In June CJI published its follow-up review of the investigative section of the Royal Mail Group in Northern Ireland. The review found that out of six recommendations made in the original inspection report, two had been fully completed whilst four were partially complete.

A seventh recommendation made in the original report with regard to the giving of reasons by directing lawyers, will form part of a full inspection by CJI during 2010-11.

The main outstanding recommendation was to establish a more direct file forwarding process between Royal Mail investigators and the PPS. Such a process would help reduce the risk of delay in dealing with cases.

At present, case files prepared by Royal Mail investigators are channelled through the PSNI for onward transmission to the PPS. This adds little in the way of quality assurance but can add significant time to the process.

Progress had been made with other recommendations and good partnership work with the PSNI had been established. However due to competing priorities, full completion of recommendations had taken much longer than anticipated.

CJI encouraged the Royal Mail Group to continue with its efforts to implement all of the recommendations.



Belfast Harbour Police

CJI published its assessment of the work undertaken by Belfast Harbour Police to implement 13 inspection recommendations made in May 2008.

The review found that seven recommendations had been fully achieved and progress had been made in relation to a further five. A recommendation regarding legislation was being taken forward by the Department of Transport.

Time and effort had been put into consulting and engaging with stakeholders within the harbour policing area with a view to developing productive relationships and providing a range of policing services.

Steps had also been taken to improve and standardise the training provided for Belfast Harbour Police officers, for example, officers had been participating in PSNI District training sessions where appropriate.

CJI welcomed the initial progress that had been made but indicated that a critical area of establishing an overarching protocol with the PSNI had yet to be completed.

CJI encouraged Belfast Harbour Police to continue with its efforts to develop and agree a comprehensive protocol with the PSNI. ■



Progress at Magilligan Prison acknowledged by Inspectorates



In their latest joint inspection of Magilligan Prison, Inspectors from CJI and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) acknowledged the progress made at the facility since the last scheduled visit took place in 2004.

Dr. Michael Maguire CJI's Chief Inspector and Nigel Newcomen, Deputy Chief Inspector of Prisons in England and Wales said that in the intervening period "*significant improvements*" had occurred in terms of the general regime provided for prisoners.

Progress had been made in terms of upgrading the facilities at the prison with the opening of two new residential units and a health care building.

Speaking after the publication of the report in September 2010, Dr. Maguire said that Inspectors were supportive of the changes which had been introduced at Magilligan Prison.

"Progress has been identified in relation to the internationally recognised 'healthy prison' standards. The standards examine the areas of

safety, respect, purposeful activity and resettlement, and Inspectors were able to report that in 2010 outcomes for prisoners at Magilligan Prison were found to be 'reasonably good' in each of the four categories.

"This represents an improvement in performance since 2004 and again since 2006, when Inspectors carried out an unannounced inspection of the prison," said Dr. Maguire, who went on to pay tribute to the prison governor at the time of the inspection for his evident determination to deliver change.

Northern Ireland's Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice however indicated that a number of barriers existed hindering further development and progress being achieved at the prison, one of which was poor industrial relations.

"When this inspection was carried out in spring 2010, industrial action by the Prison Officers' Association (POA), was ongoing which was seriously limiting both prisoners' time out of cell and access to purposeful activity," said Dr. Maguire.

Unlock times were found to have slipped by one hour at each session which meant prisoners spent three hours more than usual locked up within their cells. Restrictive officer staffing agreements in place at the prison meant that only 119 of the potential 158 education places listed could be used.

The overall physical environment at Magilligan Prison which included the unsatisfactory night sanitation system and wide range of accommodation spread out over a large, badly planned site, was also identified as a barrier to further progress.

Dr. Maguire concluded by noting the important contribution made by management in delivering change. He commended the Northern Ireland Prison Service for the work that has been carried out at Magilligan Prison.

"We hope that solid support will be forthcoming from Northern Ireland Prison Service Headquarters to assist in sustaining this progress in the future," he said. ■



Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody arrangements examined by CJI

CJI published its thematic inspection of Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody arrangements in Northern Ireland in October 2010.

The inspection, which was led by Stephen Dolan, reviewed the escorting services provided by the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and private contractors. It also looked at the custody suites of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service to assess the quality and efficiency of service provided.

Whilst the inspection reported that in the main the basic needs of prisoners were met and the service provided to the courts service was acceptable, the quality of court facilities were found to vary. The report also indicated the treatment of prisoners could be improved.

The main provider of prisoner escorting and court custody services in Northern Ireland is the Northern Ireland Prison Service Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS). Inspectors found the PECCS service was well managed, that staff displayed a good attitude and there was a basic level of performance management information.

The approach to risk assessment, static security and handcuffing was found to be inconsistent between each of the four providers of prison escort and court custody services. Inspectors identified that the security-focused nature of the PECCS policy had an adverse impact on prisoners with some expressing concerns about safety and comfort during transport in cellular vehicles.

Comparisons with other jurisdictions showed the approach to prisoner risk assessment employed by PECCS staff during escort and while in court custody facilities, resulted in prisoners in Northern Ireland being unable to avail of some basic amenities. They included access to reading materials and hot drinks, which are available in similar circumstances to prisoners in England and Wales.

On a positive note the inspection highlighted the benefits of the use of video-links for prisoners on remand. The report recommended that consideration should be given to extending this service via the use of dedicated video-link courts which would reduce the cost of custody staff.

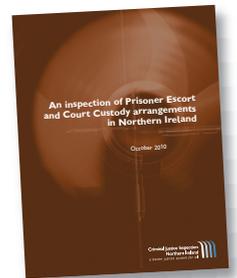
Comparisons with other providers were difficult due to the fragmented nature of the provision of these

services in Northern Ireland and the involvement of four separate suppliers.

However, CJI identified that this in itself suggested further economies of scale could be achieved if all prisoner escorting and court custody services were provided by a single supplier.

As part of the inspection, Inspectors analysed the costs incurred by the PSNI in providing prisoner escort and court custody services. This analysis indicated that a minimum saving of £780,000 per annum could be achieved by outsourcing. Similarly, outsourcing the escorting and custody service provided by PECCS could provide the opportunity to transfer the risk of sick absence costs of almost £300,000 per annum.

In conclusion, the report noted that the quality of the court custody infrastructure was variable and in the worst instances, was not fit for purpose. As a result CJI recommended a strategic review of the courts estate should be carried out by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service. ■



New finance manager appointed

CJI's new finance manager Stephanie Brotherston has taken over responsibility for managing the financial resources of the organisation.

Stephanie is a qualified accountant who joined CJI's Business Support Team in October 2010.

Prior to working with the Inspectorate, Stephanie spent three years with Belfast-based accountancy firm Grant Thornton. Prior to that Stephanie worked with Flanagan Edmonds Bannon for two and a half years.

Stephanie holds a BA (Hons) in Accounting from University of Ulster (Jordanstown) and is a member of the Chartered Accountants Ireland. In addition, Stephanie has a HNC in Computing.

Stephanie chose to join CJI because of her long-term interest in the criminal justice system. She felt the position would also be rewarding in terms of her role in maintaining a sound system of financial management. ■



Domestic Violence and Abuse

In December 2010 CJI published its thematic inspection report into how incidents of domestic violence and abuse are handled by the criminal justice agencies. The inspection fieldwork was undertaken in late 2009 by Inspectors Rachel Lindsay and Dr. Ian Cameron.

The inspection looked at the issue of domestic violence and abuse from the point at which an initial report was made through to its investigation, prosecution and court disposal. Inspectors met with victims of domestic violence, representatives of the justice organisations and voluntary organisations who support victims.

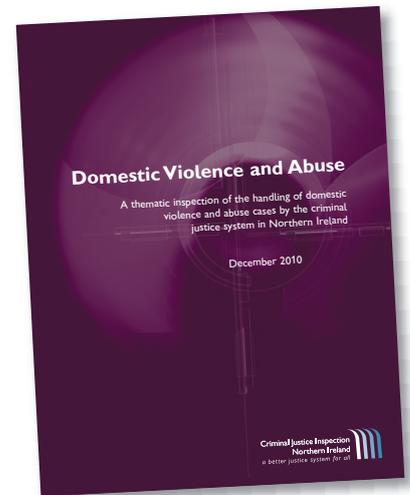
Domestic violence and abuse is a significant problem in Northern Ireland with 24,482 incidents reported to the PSNI in 2009-10, equating to one incident every 21 minutes. It can occur regardless of gender, social group, class, religion, age, race, disability or sexual orientation.

Inspectors found that there had been improvements in the manner in which such incidents are handled by the criminal justice agencies. For

example, some good practice was identified including the links between the justice agencies as well as the voluntary and community sector and in particular, the service provided by the PSNI Domestic Abuse Officers. The roll-out of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) was also a positive step towards addressing the safety of victims at high risk of harm.

The inspection report did not identify one single issue arising that would significantly improve the overall performance of Northern Ireland's criminal justice system. The number of cases which ultimately result in a conviction is impacted on by cases not meeting the Test for Prosecution and a high number of victims withdrawing their support for the prosecution and their complaints.

CJI made 13 recommendations aimed at strengthening the way in which domestic violence and abuse cases are dealt with. These included the need to improve the consistency of service across PSNI Districts and for the PSNI to review the role and skills of Domestic Abuse Officers. It was



also recommended the PPS continue to review domestic violence and abuse cases where a 'no prosecution' decision has been made. This should be carried out in an effort to establish whether actions could be taken, where appropriate with the police, to improve the likelihood of the Test for Prosecution being met. The involvement of a properly resourced Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service to enhance the MARAC service was also recommended. ■

New inspector strengthens experience of CJI team

Derek Williamson joined CJI as a temporary Inspector in June 2010.

Prior to joining the Inspectorate, Derek was a Detective Chief Superintendent in the PSNI and Head of Serious Crime Branch.

During his near 30 year career in policing Derek held a variety of positions and specialist posts, some of which included operational planning, child abuse and rape, media and public relations, internal discipline,

and major crime investigation.

Derek shares CJI's vision of a better justice system for all and believes that joining the Inspectorate will give him the opportunity to further contribute to the justice system in Northern Ireland and to influence positive change that can deliver an enhanced experience for those who engage with it.

Derek holds a BSc (Hons) in Social Policy, a Diploma in Applied Social Sciences, and an HNC in Police Studies. He was awarded the Queens

Police Medal (QPM) in June 2010.

Derek is leading CJI's inspection on the Treatment of Victims and Witnesses and carried out CJI's report on the Northern Ireland Prison Services' enquiry into the erroneous release of prisoners in September and October 2010. ■

