



Note for Information - Operation of Prison Tuck Shops

All prisons and places of detention have a prison shop or “Tuck Shop”. The shop is operated by the IPS and staffed by Prison Officers. The items stocked in the shop are similar that those stocked in any convenience shop or newsagents and include, among other things, - confectionary, fresh fruit, toiletries, cards, stamps, soft drinks, sweets, biscuits, tobacco products and batteries.

The annual turnover of the Tuck Shops, in 2012, was approximately €8m.

‘Profits’ generated from prisoner purchases in the tuck shop are used to support prisoners through the Prisoner Assist Programme Fund. At the end of each month, gross ‘profits’ are transferred to the Prisoner Assist Programme Fund to facilitate hardship payments to prisoners and support other programmes and services for prisoners. In addition, initiatives such as the Red Cross Programme and the Community Return Programme are also part funded from these ‘profits’.

In 2012 gross ‘profits’ in the region of €0.9m were generated. It should be noted that the IPS does not deduct the costs associated with running the Tuck Shops from these ‘profits’, such as, staffing costs, provision of facilities and utility costs.

Standard Product List

In 2011, the operation of the Tuck Shops was reviewed by the IPS and to ensure consistency and uniformity of Tuck Shop products it was agreed that a standard product list would be implemented. Individual prison Governors can select the range of products available in their own prisons from this list (of 2,800 products). All products are risk assessed to ensure fire, health and safety standards are met.

Following a competitive tender, a contract was awarded to BWG in March 2013 for the supply of products to the individual prisons. The introduction of this contract will generate volume discounts for the IPS through buying stock in bulk, the availability of promotional prices and will also generate staffing efficiencies as previously a substantial amount of the Tuck Shop Officers allocated hours were taken up with processing individual orders, invoices and receiving multiple deliveries.

Standard Pricing Policy

Prior to the Tuck Shop review, each Governor had discretion as to the prices charged for various products in their Tuck Shop. This resulted in products being sold at different prices across the prison estate. A key recommendation from the review was that a Standard Pricing Policy be introduced and this was also rolled out in March.

The Governors Sub Group is responsible for setting the standard product prices. It has been agreed that the Standard Pricing Policy will be to charge the Recommended Retail Price (RRP), as notified by the contracted supplier (BWG), in all prisons. This new pricing policy is being rolled out in December 2013.

Purchases and payments

Prisoners do not have access to cash while in custody. Prisoners are paid a daily gratuity in line with the IPS Incentivised Regimes Policy. There are 3 levels of gratuity - Enhanced €2.20, Standard €1.70 and Basic €0.95. Prisoners may also have private cash lodged in their accounts. Prisoners also have an opportunity to earn further gratuity by engaging in work in the prisons such as cleaners, painters, kitchen workers or waste management. Any purchases made in the Tuck Shop are electronically deducted from the prisoners account.

The operation of the prison Tuck Shops will be kept under review.

December 2013.