



### Minister for Justice officially opens Limerick B Division

Minister for Justice, Simon Harris TD, officially opened the new B Division at Limerick Prison today (Friday 5th May 2023).

This brand new facility provides modern prisoner accommodation, enhanced prisoner work and training facilities and new staff support facilities. The new B Division provides 102 modern cells with full in-cell sanitation, representing a significant milestone in the Irish Prison Service plan to end the practice that is colloquially known as “slopping out”.

In addition to the prisoner accommodation, the development also includes the provision of ancillary services for staff and prisoners including, prisoner workshops, a new prison laundry and kitchen, recreational rooms and exercise yard, staff locker rooms, staff mess, administration support offices.

Speaking at the event to mark the formal opening of the new facility, the Minister acknowledged that this complex construction project was completed to a very high standard and complemented all involved in the project for their efforts.

The Minister went on to say:

**“It is important that people in custody are helped and supported to address the underlying causes of their offending behaviour. Prisons should be designed to do more than house people. They need to work to rehabilitate people if we are to reduce reoffending rates.**

**This new building reflects clearly the philosophy that our prisons are institutions of rehabilitation. Places where a sentence is not only served but where time is spent equipping people with the skills needed to make better choices and build a crime – free future. Ensuring the right services are on-site to do this will reduce reoffending and benefit those in custody, their families and friends and the wider communities.**

The delivery of the new Limerick Prison B Wing is the most recent development completed by the Irish Prison Service to modernise the prison estate. The Government has provided significant capital funding to the Irish Prison Service in order to enhance existing prison infrastructure and this development forms part of a €70M investment by Government to improve and modernise Prison facilities in Limerick.



Notwithstanding the challenges the development faced since its commencement in 2019, most noteworthy being the Covid 19 pandemic, the project has been delivered within budget.

Also included in this project is the construction of a new 50 space female prison which will provide an additional 22 female spaces - it is expected that this accommodation will become operational later this year.

The additional spaces added by the B Division, and by the new female prison, will greatly assist the Irish Prison Service in managing the continued growth of the prison population.

While the new spaces are welcome, the provision of additional prison capacity is central to the development of the new Irish Prison Service Capital Plan.

The Minister went on to say

**“Last week I brought a memo to Government outlining capacity issues in prisons and identifying four capital projects at the existing Castlerea, Cloverhill, Midlands and Mountjoy prisons that could deliver over 400 prison cells over the next 5 years and would provide accommodation for a minimum of 620 additional prisoners.**

**I will now be engaging with the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform with a view to progressing an agreed schedule of capital builds across the prison estate.”**

End

Notes

### **Limerick Prison B Division Development**

The construction of the Division commenced in February 2019, this would replace Limerick Prison A and B wings. B Division comprises of 100 prisoner accommodation cells including 1 disabled access cell, 1 special observation cell and 1 close supervision cell. All cells are 12m<sup>2</sup>, which is sufficient in size for double occupancy if required, these cells include full in cell sanitation including toilet, wash hand basin and in cell shower. The cells also include a workstation and desk and include in-cell cabling that will allow for in cell telephony.

In addition to the prisoner accommodation the development also included the provision of new prisoner services including a kitchen and laundry that will service the



full prison. New woodwork and fabric workshops have also been constructed as well as a recreation area including pool table and games area and a new yard with all-weather playing surface.

The lower ground floor provides a staff services area including new staff Mess, locker rooms and new staff gymnasium. Additionally there is a staff garden to support staff wellbeing.

The building has been constructed with careful consideration of the environment with regard to carbon emissions and energy efficiency and has achieved a rating of “Very Good” under the BREEAM rating scale



