

PROTECTION OF PRISON STAFF

1. A booklet on personal protection measures is widely circulated throughout the Service and the topic is covered during the induction course for new recruits. All members of staff are frequently warned of the need for continuous vigilance and information on threats emanating either from Prison sources or from the RUC is immediately communicated to all prison establishments.
2. Names and addresses of staff are passed to the RUC so that periodic surveillance can be maintained by passing patrols. In cases of specific threat the RUC decide whether the level of surveillance should be increased.
3. Where officers feel at risk and wish to have advice on the protection of their homes the RUC will visit the officer and make recommendations. A two-way door communicator is provided for any member of staff who wishes to have one; and in the case of staff considered to be at special risk additional measures such as Macrolon (protective glass) lights are also provided at public expense. Where an officer under specific threat wishes to move house financial assistance is provided on receipt of confirmatory evidence from the RUC.
4. Firearms (Walther pistols), on loan from the RUC, are supplied on request for personal protection. Approximately three-quarters of Prison Service staff carry weapons. Light-weight concealable body armour is also supplied to officers wishing to have it. It is primarily for travelling between home and establishment and off-duty wear but may be worn in any work situation where the officer considers it prudent to do so. In addition heavy duty flak jackets are provided for officers manning specific posts.

5. Where it becomes known that an officer's privately owned vehicle may have been identified by a paramilitary group arrangements exist with the Department of the Environment for the speedy change of car registration numbers.

6. Following the murder of Governor McConnell the RUC was requested to reassess the threat to staff. Police advice is that there is no intelligence at present to suggest a resumption of general attacks on rank and file members by Republican terrorist groups. However, members of the Service, especially those in high positions, must regard themselves as potential targets and adopt a high level of security at all times. In cases where there has been a specific threat to Governor grades steps have been taken to improve physical security at homes and provide detailed advice on personal security. The Governor of Maze has been provided with a protected car.

7. In the particular case of Mr Murtagh, Governor of Armagh, the following additional specific measures have been taken:
 - a. arrangements have been made for him to sleep in secure prison accommodation as often as he wishes. He does so on several nights each week and he has been compensated for any additional expenditure incurred;

 - b. he has been provided by the Police Authority with a protected vehicle which is being changed as a matter of urgency;

 - c. the Department offered to purchase a house which he would occupy but he declined saying that he wished to purchase his own;

 - d. he has been offered financial assistance to move house and is actively looking for a new house in a safer area;

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- e. his request to have his Walther pistol replaced by a Ruger which he considers would afford him better protection has been referred to the Chief Constable.

Security and Operations
Prison Department

March 1984

CONFIDENTIAL