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No. 4177 P. 9/11


MCALISKEYPoints to make

- case kept under constant review; agree that handling is important.
- not helped by inaccurate reports in the press and elsewhere that she would be shackled during the birth. This is not and never has been the case. Neither will she be restrained either on her journey to or from the hospital.
- as a result of an earlier review her category status was changed from Category A (High Risk) to Category A (Standard Risk). This means that she will not be strip searched before and after each visit. (In common with all other prisoners she is subject to a strip search as part of the cell searching procedure; as part of drug testing procedures or randomly.)
- Prison Service have exercised their discretion to enable parents and sister to have open visits: kept under review until on approved list. Father of her child already on approved list.
- request for two birthing partners approved, subject to the policy of the hospital she will be taken to give birth; who they are is for Miss McAliskey.
- if she wants she can be out of her cell between 9 and 10 hours a day. Only locked in her cell during mealtimes and during the night. She can freely associate with other prisoners when she is out of her cell. Offered exercise daily.
- her request to keep her baby while she is in prison is being given urgent consideration by the Prison Service.

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- apart from obvious security considerations affecting McAliskey the request is being treated in the same manner and subject to the same procedures as any other women prisoner.

Background

The Taoiseach may seek an update on McAliskey, about whom he was questioned during the plenary session of the BIIPB in Dublin last week. Amongst other things the Taoiseach said that he hoped she would not be shackled during birth; he also said that her partner should be with her; she should keep the baby and should have open family visits. He said that whatever her alleged offences it was important to remember that a new child was coming into being; he also said that the case had the potential to do harm if it was not handled properly. He may pursue these points with the Prime Minister. Many aspects of her custody arrangements have been revised by the Director of Operations (South); there is to be a review on 13 March. By this stage he will have a report from amongst others Islington Social Services. Aspects being considered are whether she will be allowed to join the mother and baby unit.