



Jail Accountability and Information Line

Monthly Report #1

Prepared by:

Sarah Speight, Souheil Benslimane, Aaron Doyle and Justin Piché

Period covered:

10 December 2018 – 9 January 2019

jailhotline@gmail.com

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About the JAIL Hotline

Background

The JAIL / Jail Accountability and Information Line is a phone line operated by community volunteers working in solidarity with people who are incarcerated at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC) and their loved ones. The line has two components: 1) Accountability (holding OCDC staff and management accountable for the treatment of incarcerated individuals through tracking and resolving human rights violations within OCDC) and 2) Information (providing resources and information to people who are incarcerated at OCDC about their rights and community resources available to them upon re-entry into the community).

The JAIL hotline launched on 10 December 2018 and has received calls on weekdays from 1pm-4pm since that time. These hours of operation were chosen with the input of people who have experienced incarceration at OCDC. Currently, we have one phone line – 613-567-JAIL (5245) – that is staffed by up to three volunteers at a time.

Objectives

- Provide resources and information to incarcerated callers on their rights
- Track human rights abuses at OCDC
- Assist prisoners with filing complaints to relevant internal and external oversight bodies, while working with them to secure resolutions through other means where necessary
- Generate awareness of the human rights issues faced by people experiencing incarceration
- Reduce the isolation experienced by incarcerated people and increase empowerment
- Connect callers to community supports
- Bring the voices of incarcerated individuals to the forefront to be heard in the community when laws, policies and practices impacting them are being debated

Context

The JAIL hotline was founded in response to long-standing issues regarding the conditions of confinement at OCDC. A provincial jail in a suburb of Ottawa, Ontario, OCDC has an official capacity of 585 beds including about 60 beds for incarcerated women in a separate unit. About two thirds of those incarcerated at OCDC are not there to serve sentences, but are awaiting their day in court. The institution has a long history of poor conditions of confinement including crowding, abuse, routine strip searches and excessive lockdowns.

The JAIL is one of several initiatives undertaken by the Criminalization and Punishment and Education Project (CPEP). CPEP was started by students and professors at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa in 2012. It now brings together professors, students, front-line workers, those affected by criminalization and punishment, and other concerned members of the community to carry out research, and public awareness activities with the goal of reducing the use of imprisonment and improving conditions of confinement.

Our monthly reports for the JAIL draw on information communicated to us by callers, the vast majority of whom are presently incarcerated at OCDC, documented in our intake and debrief forms that accompany each call. No information is gathered and documented without the explicit consent of callers.



** Temporary Holding Cells at OCDC (Seymour 2016)*

Intake

Number of Calls

Figure 1 shows the distribution of calls received by the JAIL hotline from 10 December 2018 to 9 January 2019. We were operational for a total of 23 weekdays. We received 148 calls during this period.

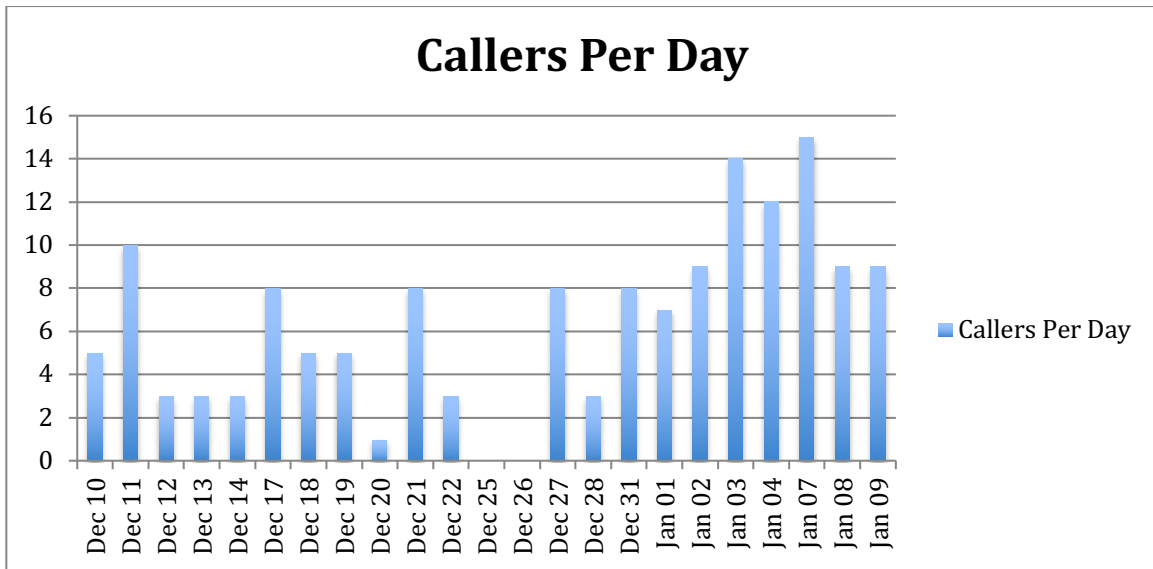


Figure 1: Callers Per Day 10 December 2018 to 9 January 2019

Types of Calls

Figure 2 shows the main issues raised during each of the calls received by the JAIL hotline in our first month of operations. Medical issues were the most often cited and urgent of the matters reported to us for resolution.

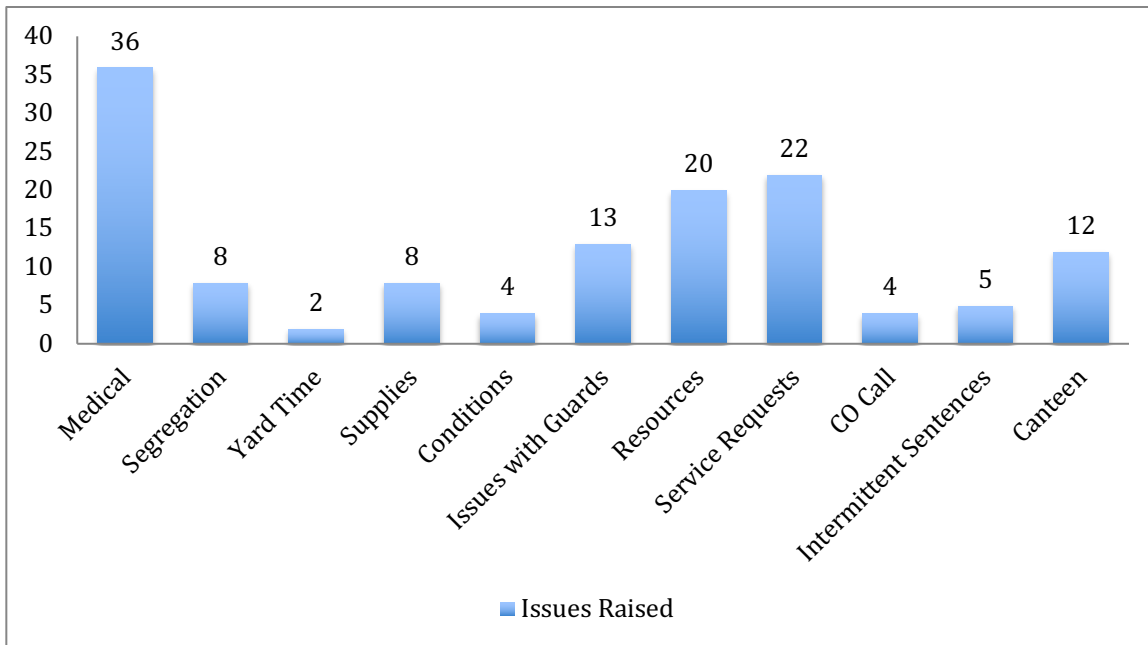


Figure 2:
Primary Issues Raised by Callers from
10 December 2018 to 9 January 2019

Issues Raised and Recommendations

As illustrated by the figure above, the vast majority of the calls received by the JAIL hotline were related to conditions of confinement. We provide details about the nature of the issues raised and recommendations to address them put forward by prisoners and their loved ones.

Health Matters

Issues with health care at OCDC were the most commonly cited set of complaints amongst callers to the JAIL hotline. Concerns ranged from violations of medical privacy, the misadministration of medication, and the failure of the institution to respond to requests for medical attention.

Lack of Medical Privacy

Several callers expressed concerns regarding medical confidentiality and the protection of their personal health information (PHI). Callers reported that medical and mental health staff have been speaking with prisoners through their doors,

sometimes without even opening the slot regarding confidential physical and mental health issues. Callers were concerned that their peers had access to their health information. This acted as a barrier for individuals who required health services because they were not comfortable with reporting private health problems to care professionals that their peers could overhear. Below are excerpts from representative calls concerning medical privacy:

“Half the time here you don’t get to go speak to the doctor privately. He will speak openly on the range about you. If you have personal issues the whole range can hear everything”.

“You don’t feel safe about talking about mental health or other sensitive issues to your general practitioner”.

This lack of confidentiality poses a significant risk to the safety of incarcerated individuals whose conditions may result in them experiencing violence or harassment within the institution. This includes people living with mental health issues, disabilities or HIV/AIDS. The situation is an affront to the dignity of incarcerated people who, like any other human being, deserve face-to-face medical care. The Ministry responsible should immediately dedicate existing space within OCDC so that private exchanges between prisoners and care providers can occur.

Misadministration of Medication

Callers frequently reported instances where their prescription medications were completely cut off upon admission, or having their dosage reduced in the name of preventing hoarding or misuse. Others reported having their extended release medication dissolved in water prior to consumption. One caller explained how dynamic between care and institutional security works, and its dire consequences:

“What they do here is if you’re suspected of hoarding they’re taking away or diluting our medication – especially people who have complex mental health issues... Meanwhile they have got a string of suicides and suicide attempts”.

Altering a patient's medication regimen is arguably a punitive measure that exposes them to significant risk. Several callers who had their extended release medication dissolved in water explained that it caused their medication to take effect all at once as opposed to over the course of the day. As a result, these individuals reported that they experienced the onset of their medication all at once, followed by a severe crash, after which they no longer experienced the intended effects of the prescribed treatment regimen. This has caused severe physical and psychological harm, stress, and other adverse effects. OCDC and the MCSCS need to put in place protocols to ensure prisoners can take their prescribed medication in a manner that follows their treatment regimen set out by medical and mental health professionals who appear to be constrained by institutional security concerns and protocols that produce great insecurity in the lives of prisoners.

Inadequate Medical Attention

In order to submit a formal request for medical attention people incarcerated at OCDC must submit a medical request form, known as a "green sheet". Callers shared that the medical request forms are not being adequately stocked. One caller explained:

"The green forms to put in requests for the doctors are only given off the medical cart and yesterday they were re-stocked, but for 3, 4 days we couldn't get them".

The inability to access medical request forms posed a barrier to access for individuals who required non-emergency medical care. Callers also shared that the medical cart often "skipped" their cell, meaning that they were unable to submit medical requests. Even those who could get access to medical request forms faced significant barriers. Two callers reported that they had not received medical attention, which they had put in a request for more than two weeks prior. Other callers shared that they did not feel that mental health staff were adequately serving their needs, they explained:

"Mental health nurses themselves, they do their rounds in segregation, but in my opinion there is not much that they can offer us, they are not giving us much to go on. "Are you okay? Is there anything I can do for you?" I'm depressed angry and frustrated – I'm looking at them like, "so thanks for just checking up on me". They come to the door, but don't even open the hatch".

“There is no help for someone who is depressed. Just recently people killed themselves in this jail and that’s a huge issue that needs to be addressed”.

These issues were compounded in the few instances reported to us by prisoners living with mental health issues who shared the poor treatment from correctional officers they have endured. For example:

“They tell us shut the fuck up, and if you’re knocking on the door for the phone or a channel change, they slough you off. There are people that have extreme mental health and the guards mock them. That’s not right, it’s not cool”.

“Guards are psychologically abusing me”.

Moving forward, prisoners need to have access to appropriate care from medical and mental health professions, as well as guards, in order to foster a better environment for all at OCDC.

Poor Air Quality and Cleanliness

Individuals from throughout the facility reported poor air quality within the institution, which was exacerbating health issues. They are requesting more frequent changes to the air filters in the jail.

Callers also reported unsanitary conditions throughout the facility, which require immediate custodial attention for health and safety reasons. One caller noted the following:

“1A – it’s gross – there was garbage all over the floor, the walls were grimy – there was a layer of grime like oily stuff dripping down. The bunks have no mattresses and because there are no mattresses you can see the bunks, and the bunks had filth all over them. There was no air in the cell and the outtake vent was covered with dust.”

Inadequate Winter Gear to Access Yard

Other callers spoke about the failure of OCDC to provide adequate winter gear such as warm jackets and toques to access yard. This poses significant risk to those

incarcerated in the winter months as temperatures are dangerously low. Further, we were informed that the outdoor jackets are “falling apart” and in disrepair. Additionally, prisoners are not being provided with warm sweatpants to wear under their overalls. It is unacceptable that prisoners are not being provided with clothing that is appropriate for the season. With the coldest months of winter ahead of us, these issues need to be rectified immediately, otherwise access to yard is illusory when people cannot do so without risking frostbite and other debilitating conditions in order to breathe fresh air for a few minutes a day.

Outdated and Expensive Phone System

Currently, calls from OCDC payphones can only be made to other landlines. This poses significant challenges as it leaves many incarcerated people unable to contact their loved ones. One caller, who has been unable to speak to his wife as a result of this restriction, stated:

“We need to be able to call cell phones. This is not a joke anymore”.

Many prisoners also reported that making collect calls was expensive, which often meant that they couldn’t speak to their loved ones for lengthy periods of time without the latter incurring significant financial hardship. Bell Canada, who is the service provider for the phone system, needs to end the predatory rates it charges prisoners and their families to stay connected. Bell Canada also needs to put in place what is necessary for prisoners to call cell phones. The current situation not only does harm to them, but also undermines community safety by serving as a barrier to connections that improve re-entry outcomes for prisoners.

Predatory Prices and Account Limits at Canteen

There were also several issues reported by callers with respect to canteen. The canteen, or commissary as it is officially known, is the only means through which OCDC prisoners can access basic hygiene products of comparable quality to those found on the outside, as well as food to supplement the woefully inadequate privatized “quick-chill” meals made by the Compass Group.

This fall, a new canteen account limit of \$180 was put in place. The change has forced prisoners to more actively coordinate contributions to their canteen accounts with multiple family members on the outside to ensure that different family members are not dropping off funds to an account that is already full. The inability for prisoners to call cell phones hinders their ability to coordinate these canteen deposits. Moreover, prisoners' families, including ones that do not reside locally, have to travel to the institution much more often following this policy change and that the institution stopped accepting cheques via mail. The problems associated with this are further exacerbated by the fact that a prisoner's visitors list is limited to six people and an individual must be on a prisoner's visitation list in order to send them funds. For prisoners, this restriction puts them in the difficult position wherein they have to hold people on their visitation list who, in some cases, cannot actually visit them, but are sending them money. One caller illustrated the impact that this has on people incarcerated at OCDC and their families:

“Families are coming from far away, so they have to come more often, and they have to coordinate their deposit because they’re otherwise unaware that someone else dropped money in your account and end-up travelling for no reason. Visitor lists can change monthly and these are the only people that can drop off money to your account. If you change from your mom to sister, your mom then comes all the way from Toronto and cannot even drop off the money. If you are trying to get money from different people, you have to keep shuffling your visit list constantly. I am losing space for visits because of the money situation and because my mom can’t just run out and get a money order because she is 80 years old. It is hard for her to get out”.

To resolve the issues noted above, callers recommended that the canteen account limit be raised from \$180 to \$500 dollars to limit the amount of times their loved ones need to travel to make deposits in their canteen accounts and to be able to afford basic necessities that are grossly overpriced. This change wouldn't impact the maximum amount of \$60 prisoners can spend on a weekly basis at canteen.

Recently, OCDC also blocked access to magazine and book orders from outside the institution. As a result, many callers have experienced distress as a result of inactivity. This has a particularly impact on those who are experiencing segregation.

This decision needs to be reversed to improve the climate within OCDC, as well as limiting the damage of incarceration, which has ramifications for us all.

Weekend Prisoners and ‘Diesel Therapy’

Those serving intermittent sentences (weekends) at OCDC face unique challenges. We are hearing that people who do weekends are not given access to a phone, often do not get showers, and are subject to transport to institutions at times when OCDC is crowded. In cases where transfers occur, the families of prisoners are typically not contacted, leaving them unaware that their loved ones have been moved to an institution in another city. The two examples below illustrate the deplorable conditions experienced by individuals serving intermittent sentences at OCDC:

“When my partner was doing weekends at the jail and OCDC was at capacity he was being transferred to another city for his weekends because of OCDC being full. He has been left stranded on release from weekends in other towns. He was not being given phone access when he was in on weekends... I recommend that [intermittent] prisoners be given access to the phone on weekends”.

“We arrived at our designated time to OCDC. After strip search, we were handed our jump suits and told we were being sent to Lindsay [the Central East Correctional Centre]. We were shackled, loaded on the back of a paddy wagon [transport truck] taken on the four-hour drive to Lindsay. We arrived at 2am. We weren’t given blanket and given segregation cells, two men per cell. We were held until breakfast and given no utensils to eat our breakfast. We weren’t given a cup and we had to drink out of the sink. We were not issued soap or a towel. It wasn’t until after lunch that we were issued blankets and soap. We didn’t get access to showers, we weren’t allowed to use the telephones, and we weren’t permitted to have a newspaper or paperback. In Lindsay, we were denied our basic rights”.

Intermittent sentencing also negatively impacts people who are on remand or serving time at OCDC, as it restricts their mobility throughout the facility over the period when weekenders are being held there. One caller explained the impact of the restrictions imposed on OCDC prisoners as a result of weekenders being held at the jail:

“They’re bringing the weekenders on our range and locking us up for the whole weekend then the guards feed our meals and we can’t do anything so we only shower and that’s it, and I don’t really think they should do that. There’s got to be a different way that they can do this. They take one cell out at a time for a 20-minute shower, so you have to decide between the phone and a shower.

Intermittent sentences were created to punish the convicted, while allowing them to keep their jobs or fulfill other responsibilities such as childcare during the week. However, the logic of this form of sentencing is questionable. If individuals are considered to be safe in their communities during the week, why imprison them on the weekends, particularly when there are less costly and more effective alternatives? Community-based alternatives to incarceration should be prioritized in order to keep criminalized persons employed and keep their families together, and improve conditions of confinement at OCDC.

Attempts to Address Issues at OCDC

While OCDC and MCSCS insist that existing internal and external oversight mechanism are adequate to address the concerns raised by prisoners (see *Appendix 2*), several callers have provided concrete examples of how such channels are inadequate when we encouraged callers to utilize these channels instead of relying solely on us to work with them to affect change. For instance, some callers expressed concern that some guards were disposing of their blue sheets, which prevented them from initiating complaint processes:

“Then the range gets searched and all our blue sheets have been taken, six or seven on the top bunk and they are all missing”.

The nature and number of calls we have received from prisoners also suggest there is much more work to be done to improve conditions of confinement at the Innes Road jail. Most of these changes could be made quickly with little to no costs in a context where the province spends more than \$800 million per year caging human beings.

Most callers who contacted the JAIL hotline did so in order to request advocacy for either a policy change within OCDC or a specific issue affecting them. These requests were handled differently depending on the nature of the issue at hand. For more general issues regarding the conditions of the facility, policies or supplies, the issues were most often addressed by contacting OCDC officials with a general outline of the issue, while protecting the anonymity of the caller(s). However, in cases such as medical emergencies, we contacted the appropriate OCDC sections where possible and identified the caller with their consent. Outlined below is a list of advocacy work undertaken by JAIL volunteers (see *Figure 3*).

Advocacy Letters (Email)	20
Phone Calls (OCDC Admin)	9
Phone Calls (OCDC Medical)	6
Phone Calls (Ministry)	2
Phone Calls (CAB/Ombudsman)	6
Formal Complaints (CNO)	2
Formal Complaints (CPSO)	1
Resource Requests	12
Total	58

Figure 3: Advocacy Work – 10 December 2018 to 9 January 2019

Advocacy Letters

Advocacy letters were utilized to inform OCDC administration of issues brought to the attention of JAIL. volunteers. These letters were sent via email to Mike Wood, the Superintendent of OCDC. In most cases, Sam Erry (Deputy Minister, MCSCS) and Mark Parisotto (Regional Director East, MCSCS) were copied on correspondence with OCDC administration. The response of the OCDC administration to written correspondence was limited to the acknowledgement of receipt of correspondence. When follow-up correspondence to the OCDC administration and MCSCS officials was sent inquiring into any attempts made to rectify the issues that had been raised, responses were seldom received.

Phone Calls (OCDC Administration and Health Care Unit)

Phone calls to the administration and the Health Care Unit (HCU) at OCDC were utilized when an issue was identified as requiring urgent attention. Volunteers had limited success corresponding with the Superintendent over the phone; as a result these calls were primarily utilized to flag issues that were also raised in email (for an example, see *Appendix 1*), in order to ensure that matters were documented. In the first few days of our work, there was some success communicating with staff in the HCU. Although occasionally HCU staff were willing to provide information to volunteers regarding policies and practices in general terms, they could not communicate information to volunteers regarding protected Personal Health Information (PHI), which, although it impeded our work was reasonable, provided the necessary action was taken. This is not always the case, but we continue to report urgent medical issues reported by callers that have not been addressed in a timely manner in order to increase their chances of getting the care they are entitled to.

Phone Calls (CAB & Ombudsman)

In cases where callers had already exhausted the internal complaint processes, and in emergency circumstances, the OCDC Community Advisory Board (CAB) and the Ontario Ombudsman were contacted. The CAB was contacted both by voicemail and email, primarily in cases that required urgent attention. The Ombudsman was contacted to flag complaints made by callers directly to the office, as we cannot make them on their behalf.

Formal Complaints (CNO & CPSO)

Three complaints were made to professional oversight bodies. Two complaints were directed to the College of Nurses Ontario (CNO), and one to the College of Physicians and Surgeons Ontario (CPSO). These complaints were all regarding restriction and misadministration of medication by HCU staff.

Resource Requests

“Resource Request” was a broad term utilized to describe non-complaint related advocacy work undertaken by the JAIL hotline. This included supporting callers in finding lawyers or obtaining legal aid certificates, providing information to

individuals on their rights at OCDC, calling Canadian Border Services Agency and the immigration office, and compiling resource lists.

Moving Forward

The volume of calls received in our first month of operations was much higher than we at the JAIL hotline had anticipated, perhaps owing to media attention from the *Ottawa Citizen*, *Ottawa Sun*, *CBC Ottawa*, and other media outlets, to whom we are grateful. The prisoners at OCDC we have heard from have been both candid in terms of the problems facing them, as well as reasonable and realistic about the changes they wish to see to improve living and working conditions at the jail. We remain steadfast in our commitment to continue this work, as well as optimistic that we can affected necessary changes with or without the cooperation of OCDC and MCSCS, who have the power to choose what kind of relationship they want with those committed to reducing the use of imprisonment, while improving conditions of confinement on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin Territory.

Appendix 1:

14 December 2018 Advocacy Letter to OCDC

Dear Superintendent (OCDC),

I am writing on behalf of the Jail Accountability and Information Line (J.A.I.L), an organization that advocates for people experiencing incarceration. The line is sponsored by the Criminalization and Punishment Education project, based at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, which has been tracking conditions of confinement at OCDC for the last six years. The purpose of this letter is to express concerns raised by our callers regarding the current conditions at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC). There are six primary concerns that have been raised by several prisoners, suggesting these issues are systemic, rather than problems affecting one prisoner:

- A) Unsanitary conditions in 1A Wing and Dorm 2;
- B) Poor air quality in the max unit;
- C) The lack of weather-appropriate yard gear during the winter;
- D) The blocking of magazine and book subscriptions from the institution;
- E) The account limit for the canteen and the visitors list restriction for canteen fund contributions; and
- F) Medical confidentiality.

We received several complaints regarding the conditions of the facility, and the resources available to prisoners. Callers explained that the conditions both in 1A Wing and in Dorm 2 were littered with garbage and were grimy.

Item A) These areas require custodial attention in order to ensure sanitary conditions for prisoners.

Further, prisoners from throughout the facility shared that the poor air quality within the institution was exacerbating health issues. Prisoners in maximum security requested that they be informed when the last air vent filter change had occurred.

Item B) We are concerned about the air quality in the max unit, and request the last date that air filters were replaced in the maximum security unit.

As you are aware, prisoners are not being provided toques for their yard time. Further, the outdoor jackets are very old and in poor repair. The prisoners are not provided with warm sweatpants to wear under their overalls. This is causing severe discomfort due to the extremely cold temperatures at this time of year. We feel it is unacceptable that prisoners are not being provided with clothing that is appropriate for the season.

Item C) We request that prisoners be provided with weather-appropriate clothing.

Several prisoners informed us of the deprivation they have experienced as a result of their inability to access their magazine and book subscriptions, which they had ordered to the institution. This inability to access reading material has caused distress to prisoners, as it leaves them with little to do. This has a serious effect on individuals who are confined to their cells for the majority of the day. This lack of stimulation can have a negative impact on the well being of prisoners. It is our understanding that magazines are still available for purchase in canteen. However, the canteen prices are prohibitively expensive for many of our callers, so it is important to them to still have access to the reading materials, which they have ordered and purchased.

Item D) We request that magazines and paperback subscriptions that are being withheld from prisoners be delivered to them.

It has been brought to our attention that significant changes have been made to the regulations surrounding canteen, which have negatively impacted both prisoners and their families. Given the high cost of canteen items in OCDC, the \$180 limit does not go very far. The new canteen account limit has produced the need for prisoners to coordinate with multiple family members on the outside to ensure that different family members are not dropping off funds to an account that is already full. The inability for prisoners to call cell phones hinders their ability to coordinate these canteen deposits. Further, those whose families reside locally have to travel to the institution much more often following the implementation of this limit. This is partially attributed to the fact that the institution stopped accepting cheques. The problems associated with this are further exacerbated by the fact that the visitors lists are limited to six people, and an individual must be on a prisoner's visitation list in order to send them funds. For prisoners, this restriction puts them in the difficult position because they have to hold people on their visitation list who could not

actually visit them but are just sending them money.

Item E) We request that the Canteen limit be set at \$500 and that the visitors list be extended from six to thirteen to enable more people to contribute to the well-being of their loved ones and friends behind bars through canteen contributions. We also request that the MCSCS review its canteen contract to offer more goods at more reasonable prices to prisoners, which is particularly important for prisoners who have families that are struggling to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads, but still want to ensure the well-being of their incarcerated loved one to the degree that is possible at OCDC

Several prisoners expressed concerns regarding medical confidentiality, and the protection of their personal health information (PHI). It was raised that medical and mental health staff have been speaking with prisoners through their doors and in a dysfunctional room regarding confidential physical and mental health issues. These prisoners are concerned that fellow prisoners are able to hear their confidential health information, and this had made them apprehensive to fully utilize health staff.

Item F) We recommend face-to-face visitation with mental health and medical staff. In no context is sharing confidential information in an open room or through a door or cell slot (“hatch”) appropriate. We request to be informed of any current or future steps to rectify the issues raised above, and the timelines these steps will occur within. We hope to receive a response to this request in writing, within five business days, as many of the issues raised require urgent attention.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Jail Accountability and Information Line (J.A.I.L.)
jailhotline@gmail.com
Criminalization and Punishment Education Project

Cc: Sam Erry | Deputy Minister | sam.erry@ontario.ca

Cc: Director, Eastern Regional Office | 25 Heakes Lane, Kingston, ON K7M 9B1

Appendix 2:
3 January 2019 Response from OCDC

Subject: Fwd:
Date: Thursday, January 3, 2019 at 3:37:16 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Jail Hotline
To: Justin Piché, adoyale2525@rogers.com
Attachments: image001.gif

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Wood, Mike (MCSCS)** <Mike.Wood@ontario.ca>
Date: Thu, Jan 3, 2019 at 3:31 PM
Subject:
To: Jail Hotline <jailhotline@gmail.com>
Cc: Danylchenko, Christina (MCSCS) <Christina.Danylchenko@ontario.ca>, Parisotto, Mark (MCSCS) <Mark.Parisotto@ontario.ca>

**Ministry of Community Safety &
Correctional Services**

Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre

2244 Innes Road

Ottawa ON K1B 4C4

Telephone: 613-824-6080, Ext. 201

Facsimile: 613-824-0732

**Ministère de la sécurité
communautaire et des services
correctionnels**

Centre de détention d'Ottawa-
Carleton

2244 chemin Innes

Ottawa ON K1B 4C4

Téléphone: 613-824-6080, Poste 201

Télécopieur: 613-824-0732



January 3, 2019

Dear J.A.I.L. Volunteers:

To start, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Personal Health Information Protection*

Act protects the personal information of individuals held by government institutions and therefore, I am not at liberty to provide you with information about any particular individual cases. Nonetheless, I can provide you with general information about correctional institution policies and practices, provincial initiatives, and the various ways that inmates are able to raise concerns while in custody.

The OCDC maintains positive relationships with the community through its work with the Community Advisory Board (CAB). CABs are independent bodies that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services established to strengthen links between the community and provincial institutions. These advisory boards consist entirely of local community volunteers from a variety of professional backgrounds who are appointed by the ministry. The CAB at the OCDC is mandated to provide advice and recommendations to the ministry and government on all aspects of the operations of the OCDC. Members of the CAB can tour the institution and speak to inmates. Any concerns identified through these discussions are brought forward to my attention as Superintendent for review and action as required at a regular CAB meeting or via direct communication.

In addition, the province established a task force to examine issues at the OCDC and make recommendations which the province has subsequently addressed. One of the recommendations was to ensure that systems are in place so that the internal inmate complaint process is tracked and transparent, with clearly defined service standards for complainants.

It may further interest you to know that while in custody, inmates can submit a *Request Form* for any number of reasons, including a request to speak with their local health care manager or superintendent regarding concerns with the delivery of health care or the attending physician. At any time, an individual may also file a complaint with The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Its website is www.cpsso.on.ca.

Inmates also have the option of contacting police or oversight agencies, such as the Office of the Ombudsman, which investigates and addresses public complaints about the decisions or actions of an Ontario government ministry, board, agency, tribunal or commission. Inmates can call the Ombudsman toll free at 1-800-263-1830 between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday. The ministry fully cooperates with oversight agency investigations.

Inmates alleging discrimination or differential treatment can speak directly with the Client Conflict Resolution Unit (CCRU), toll free at 1-866-535-0019. The CCRU fields complaints directly from inmates and provides advisory services to management to assist them in the resolution of complaints of differential treatment based on prohibited grounds, as outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code. Inmates also have the option of pursuing alleged human rights violations by confidential correspondence to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario and/or the Human Rights Legal Support Centre.

The Inmate Information Guide, which includes information on these avenues to raise concerns, is posted in all inmate living areas and is also available upon request.

I trust the above information, which outlines the various processes that are available for inmates, addresses your concerns and is of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

Mike Wood

Superintendent

Ottawa Carlton Detention Centre

c: Ms. Christina Danylchenko, Assistant Deputy Minister

Mr. Mark Parisotto, Regional Director, Institutional Services, Eastern Region

Appendix 3:
9 January 2019 Advocacy Letter to OCDC



JAIL / Jail Accountability and Information Line
c/o Criminalization and Punishment Education Project
120 University Private – Room 14002
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1N 6N5

Mike Wood
Superintendent
Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre
Ministry of Community and Correctional Services

January 9, 2018

RE: Addressing Problems at OCDC

Dear Superintendent Wood,

We wish to begin by acknowledging the efforts you, along with other members of management and staff at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC), have made so far to implement many of the recommendations tabled as part of the 2016 Task Force. We have heard from prisoners and their loved ones that some of the changes made have contributed to improvements in conditions of confinement over the years. However, we are sure you will agree there remains more work to be done to improve the treatment of people under the province's care to the degree that is possible in a detention setting.

Since launching the JAIL / Jail Accountability and Information Line on 10 December 2018, we have received 148 calls from prisoners and their loved ones reporting problems that continue to plague OCDC (see below). The volume of calls we have received suggest that the various forms of internal and external oversight you noted in your 3 January 2019 email to us are not working adequately as intended. For instance, prisoners have frequently told us that their complaints often go unaddressed and that they have been refused forms to file grievances or had their complaints tampered with by some staff members. They report lacking trust in institutional processes that we have encouraged them to continue to use before turning to us for assistance, to which they often tell us they have already exhausted. You point out the work of the Community Advisory Board (CAB), but it is important to note that the last CAB annual report made public, from 2016, points out that recommendations from previous reports in 2014 and 2015 remain outstanding and that "there remains a lot to be done". Many prisoners seem to remain unaware of the CAB and accountability is undermined when CAB reports are not made public.

Below, we reiterate the concerns regarding the conditions of confinement at OCDC outlined in our December 2018 email to you. It is our hope that in addressing these concerns, OCDC will be a safer place for prisoners, staff and management. It is our preference, if possible, not to have to organize campaigns to address the above noted issues, but if the concerns we raise on behalf of prisoners and their loved ones that we work with are not remedied to the degree that is possible or there is no reasonable explanation offered by you or the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services as to why some of the issues flagged cannot be addressed in the short-term, we will organize around these issues to generate public support as a means of achieving our goals, which

mirror your own – to ensure care and safety at the Innes Road Jail. The requests previously raised include:

A) 1A Wing and Dorm 2 require custodial attention in order to ensure sanitary conditions for prisoners.

B) We are concerned about the air quality in the max unit, and request the last date that air filters were replaced in the maximum-security unit.

C) We request that prisoners be provided with weather-appropriate clothing on yard.

D) We request that magazines and paperback subscriptions that are being withheld from prisoners be delivered to them.

E) We request that the canteen limit be set at \$500 and that the visitors list be extended from six to twelve to enable more people to contribute to the well-being of their loved ones behind bars through canteen contributions. We also request that the MCSCS review its canteen contract to offer more goods at more reasonable prices to prisoners, which is particularly important for prisoners who have families that are struggling to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads, but still want to ensure the well-being of their incarcerated loved one to the degree that is possible at OCDC; and

F) We request face-to-face visitation with mental health and medical staff. In no context is sharing confidential information in an open room or through a door or cell slot (“hatch”) appropriate.

We request to be informed of any current or future steps to rectify the issues raised above, and the timelines these steps will occur within by 11 January 2019 (2 business days). We will make note of your response and that of the MCSCS in our first monthly report, which will be sent to you and MCSCS officials, along with provincial legislators and members of the press, on 14 January 2019.

JAIL hotline volunteers and CPEP members look forward to working with you in the days, weeks, months and years ahead to improve things at OCDC.

Sincerely,

Sarah Speight
Coordinator, Jail Accountability and Information Line
PhD Student, Geography, University of Ottawa

Souheil Benslimane
Coordinator, Jail Accountability and Information Line

Aaron Doyle, PhD
Co-founder, Criminalization and Punishment Education Project
Associate Professor and Chair, Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University

Justin Piché, PhD
Co-founder, Criminalization and Punishment Education Project
Associate Professor, Criminology, University of Ottawa