

## **Background**

An Inter-Ministerial Working Group was established in September 2012 by the then Ministry of Youth and Culture. The primary purpose of the Working Group was to examine the issues and challenges that affect children within the care of the State.

One of the main focus of the Committee was to provide a solution for the separation of juveniles who come in conflict with the law from adults in police lock-ups. In this regard a programme was developed to establish self-contained child friendly holding units to accommodate such children. Fourteen (14) units were to be established in strategic locations across the fourteen parishes and Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme (JEEP) was identified as the source of funding.

The plan was to retrofit/construct the units in phases. Four were to be completed in the first phase namely Bridgeport in St. Catherine, Barrett Town in St. James, Moneague in St. Ann and Nain in St. Elizabeth.

## **Update**

The Bridgeport facility was handed over to the JCF and put into operation but shortly thereafter the facility had to be closed due to the issues relating to the type of toilets installed among other things. With regards to the other three facilities, none could be operationalized as they did not meet the required standards.

*The issues are as follows:*

### Barrett Town

1. A grill cage needs to be installed enclosing the Fire extinguisher and hose to prevent easy access by the children.
2. The fire alarm needs to be connected.
3. The bed rails and guards around light receptacles are to be so installed to prevent strings or items of clothing being attached to them.
4. Repairs to defective toilet, large cracks and flaking concrete in roof and wall are needed.
5. The spaces between the wall and the steps that afford access to the bunks are to be sealed to prevent serious injury to the children or the hiding of contraband.
6. Vertical bars are to be attached to the existing grills in the recreation area and all electrical outlets covered.
7. The CCTV monitor in the Guard Room is to be relocated and anchored from the roof towards the counter for instant view by Police personnel on duty.
8. The construction on the roof of the facility does not allow for the proper draining of rain water and is seeping through the roof into the facility.
9. The ventilation for the cells is very poor and could lead to suffocation.

## Status of Retrofitted Children's Detention Facilities Island Wide

### Moneague

1. A grill cage needs to be installed enclosing the Fire extinguisher and hose to prevent easy access by the children.
2. The guards around light receptacles are to be so installed to prevent strings or items of clothing being attached to them.
3. The window between the recreation room and the monitor room needs to be secured so that no access can be gained through it, especially by children.
4. The construction on the roof of the facility does not allow for the proper draining of rain water and will over time seep through the roof into the facility.
5. The ventilation for the cells is very poor and could lead to suffocation if the windy climate at Moneague should cease.

### Nain

The facility is not suitable for habitation due to very poor ventilation.

### Bridgeport

The Bridgeport Facility which was operational has to be closed on a regular basis, as the toilets failed to work very often, causing real sanitation issues. This is due to the fact that the system is a suction one that cannot be flushed by buckets when the water pressure is low. Maintenance of the bathroom fixtures is very expensive.

### ***The Way Forward***

The MNS Property team will lead in the conducting of an assessment of the four units to determine what adjustment is required to make them fully functional. Thereafter, the activities will be costed and the relevant funding sought.