



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

HMYOI POLMONT

INSPECTION: 2-4 MARCH 2005

LAST INSPECTION 15-23 MARCH 2004



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

CONTENTS

PAGE(S)

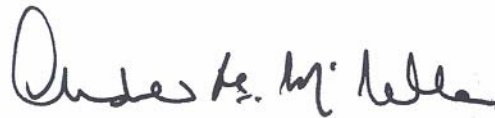
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	PREAMBLE	2
3.	PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS AND POINTS OF NOTE	3-15
4.	NEW DEVELOPMENTS	16-17

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The visit to HMYOI Polmont was made as part of a programme to visit every prison each year in which a full inspection is not being made. In the course of such visits the purpose is to follow up points of note from previous inspections, to examine any significant changes, and to explore issues arising from the establishment's own assessment of itself. It should not be seen as an attempt to inspect the whole life of the establishment.

1.2 The Inspection Team comprised:

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April 2005

ANDREW R C McLELLAN
HM CHIEF INSPECTOR OF PRISONS

2. PREAMBLE

2.1 Slopping out is always bad: no amount of improvement can make it good. Slopping out still happens in Polmont. It is particularly bad that it happens in a hall which holds prisoners on remand. A good feature of most Scottish prisons is that prisoners who have not been convicted usually live in good conditions. It is very upsetting that the only remand prisoners who are regularly slopping out are under 21 years of age. However, real improvements have been made in the arrangements for slopping out since the last report. Among them, and most importantly, at the time of inspection no prisoner who was slopping out was sharing a cell.

2.2 Changes in Nevis Hall are encouraging. Last year's report identified the atmosphere in Nevis Hall as "tense and oppressive". It is now very much changed: a relaxed atmosphere within a redecorated hall. More significantly, Nevis Hall now leads the strategy against addiction. The report gives some details of the innovative new approach which is being welcomed by both staff and prisoners in Nevis Hall.

2.3 A major building project is taking place. This is the first of two new Activities Blocks. It is hoped that this may be completed by the summer of 2005.

2.4 It is not possible to report any improvement in three serious matters which caused concern in the report of the last inspection.

- The portions of food are no bigger than before, despite an attempt having been made to increase them. Serving larger helpings caused such an increase in cost that it had to be abandoned.
- There is not enough work for the number of young adults in Polmont.
- Children under the age of 16 are still being held in Polmont. Eleven were held there within the last year, one of them for a period of 130 days. The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "*In all actions concerning children the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.*" And that imprisonment of a child "*shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.*"

3. PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS AND POINTS OF NOTE

Ten Recommendations were made. Progress as follows:

Achieved	2
Partly Achieved	4
Ongoing	1
Not Achieved	3

Fifty two Points of Note were made. Progress as follows:

Achieved	31
Partly Achieved	5
Ongoing	4
Not Achieved	11
No longer relevant	1

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

For Ministers

11.1 Children under the age of 16 should not be held in a prison (paragraph 8.45).

Not achieved. It is not possible for Polmont itself to control or limit the number of children under 16 who are detained within it. Since the last inspection one year ago 11 such people were admitted. Seven were as the result of there being no space in a secure unit. They were in Polmont for an average of 13 days, ranging from 2 days to 42 days. Four were as a result of their being deemed by Secure Units as too difficult to be held. Their average length of stay was 44 days, ranging from 13 days to 130 days. No children under 16 were in Polmont during the inspection.

For Establishment/SPS

11.2 Better arrangements for access to sanitation and hygiene should be found in Argyll Hall (paragraph 2.4).

Partly achieved. Prisoners in Argyll Hall are still required to slop out. However, the porta-potties have been replaced with a plastic pot and urine bottle. The two dormitories in the hall

have had in-cell sanitation installed. No one who is required to slop out shares a cell. Procedures are in place for infection control and these are monitored.

11.3 Better arrangements for access to sanitation and hygiene should be found in Spey Hall (paragraph 2.6).

Partly achieved. Prisoners in Spey Hall, who are prisoners on remand, are still required to slop out. However, the porta-potties have been replaced with a plastic pot and a urine bottle. Two of the three dormitories have had in-cell sanitation installed. No one who is required to slop-out shares a cell. Procedures are in place for infection control and these are monitored. A cell re-painting programme has started, although rooms are dingy, poorly furnished and bleak.

11.4 The conditions for, and treatment of, prisoners in Dunedin Hall should be improved (paragraph 2.31).

Partly achieved. Conditions in Dunedin are still basic. The cells lack any furniture apart from a bed, although new furniture is to be supplied. The fitness room has been improved and young adults can access this daily. Showers are also available daily. Bedding is no longer removed during the day. Overall, there has been little improvement in what is a very limited regime. However, Dunedin does now benefit from having its own group of staff which should result in greater consistency of approach and better staff/young adult relationships.

11.5 Arrangements for the emergency cell intercom system in Iona Hall should be reviewed as a matter of urgency (paragraph 2.37).

Partly achieved. The system has been examined, but is still not reliable.

11.6 Consideration should be given to the provision of more modern and appropriate holding facilities in reception (paragraph 5.4).

Not achieved. Young adults are still held in cubicles, sometimes for lengthy periods during staff meal breaks and during the evening peak of activity. A new reception is planned within the development of the YOI.

11.7 Consideration should be given to putting in place a system which ensures that prisoners who do not go to the Links Centre have an induction and assessment which is of a comparable standard to the majority of the prisoner population (paragraph 5.12).

Achieved. The SPS Core Assessment is carried out in Cramond Hall by Links Centre staff. Young adults from Cramond can now come to the Links Centre one half day per week for induction, although the uptake on this is variable.

11.8 The young adults should be offered better access to regime opportunities and should not spend as much time in their cells (paragraph 5.28).

Not achieved. There are still insufficient work places for the convicted population. Efforts are being made to maximise access to the places available, and the new activities building should help ease this situation.

11.9 SPS should introduce, as a matter of urgency, a quality assurance process to ensure that all healthcare documentation is transferred with prisoners (paragraph 6.23).

Achieved as far as Polmont is concerned. A private company now delivers the healthcare documentation.

11.10 A system should be introduced which ensures all young adults attend Health Centre, Dental, Psychology and Social Work appointments as arranged (paragraphs 6.25, 6.30, 6.42, 8.17, 8.26).

Ongoing. Professionals facilitate booking appointments for young adults. However, the system needs to be reviewed to ensure that the young adults do attend, and that there are adequate interview rooms available.

12. POINTS OF NOTE

12.1 An increase in activity places and improvements to existing regime facilities are required to meet the needs of the increased population (paragraph 2.2).

Not achieved. There are still insufficient work places for the convicted population.

12.2 Conditions in Argyll Hall are very poor and should be improved (paragraph 2.5).

Not achieved. Conditions in Argyll Hall are still very poor: most cells need to be redecorated and refurnished. While the Hall is noticeably cleaner than during the last inspection, the practice of throwing litter, including bodily waste out of windows continues.

12.3 The “self deprivation” prisoners in Spey Hall should have reasonable access to a regime (paragraph 2.8).

No longer relevant. The practice of allowing young adults to “self deprive” themselves of association has been discontinued. Those requiring protection from other prisoners are now located in Cramond House. Young adults from Spey Hall who were interviewed did not raise concerns about personal safety.

12.4 Facilities and conditions should be improved in ‘A’ Section in Nevis Hall (paragraph 2.11).

Ongoing. In September 2004 Nevis Hall became the Addiction Prevention Centre. Facilities and conditions have improved dramatically.

12.5 The practice of washing dishes and cutlery in a cupboard in Nevis Hall should stop (paragraph 2.12).

Achieved. This practice has stopped, and prisoners now dine outside Nevis Hall.

12.6 Facilities generally in Nevis Hall should be improved (paragraph 2.12).

Achieved.

12.7 The reasons for not letting young adults in Cramond Hall recreation in place of outside exercise when it is raining should be examined (paragraph 2.15).

Achieved. The reasons have been reviewed but the situation has not improved. Young adults are offered exercise if it is raining, but if they refuse they are not offered recreation. SPS has indicated that the reason for this is that Polmont staff resources would be stretched to have exercise and recreation operating simultaneously.

12.8 The poor interviewing facilities in Cramond Hall should be reviewed (paragraph 2.16).

Achieved. The facilities have been reviewed and two rooms have been identified. At the time of inspection, however, the interview facilities were still inadequate.

12.9 The use of the large room in the basement of Lomond Hall should be reviewed (paragraph 2.20).

Achieved. A review has been carried out, but there are no clear plans for the future use of this room.

12.10 Management should review the way young adults in cellular confinement are treated (paragraph 2.28).

Achieved. The practice of removing mattresses has stopped. However, young adults on punishment in Polmont are still not allowed radios.

12.11 Young adults in Dunedin Hall should be given information on what to expect during their stay there (paragraph 2.29).

Achieved. An information sheet has been produced which is issued to young adults on admission to Dunedin.

12.12 The reasons for not allowing individuals in Iona Hall to dine communally during weekdays should be examined (paragraph 2.35).

Not achieved. Young adults in Iona Hall do not dine communally.

12.13 Funds should be sought to improve CCTV coverage in some areas of the YOI (paragraph 3.4).

Not achieved.

12.14 The practice of some staff shouting and swearing at young adults and calling them by their last name should stop immediately (paragraph 3.8).

Ongoing. This behaviour is now challenged when it occurs and severe cases are dealt with through the code of conduct.

12.15 Management should investigate why there are so few Complaint Procedure Forms submitted by young adults (paragraph 3.12).

Partly achieved. Reasons have been examined but young adults still have to ask a member of staff for a form.

12.16 Ways should be found of tackling the waiting lists for drugs interventions (paragraph 4.12).

Achieved. The opening of Nevis Hall as an Addiction Prevention Centre has addressed this.

12.17 Management should continue to look at the possibility of creating an alternative addictions support unit to the one currently housed in Argyll Hall (paragraph 4.16).

Achieved. Nevis Hall is now the Addiction Prevention Centre.

12.18 Management should look more closely at the help it offers to young adults with alcohol problems (paragraph 4.17).

Achieved. Addressing alcohol problems is now a key part of the work of the Addiction Prevention Centre.

12.19 Where possible, rooms for remand prisoners who are transferring to Barlinnie for court, should be retained to allow personal responsibility (paragraph 5.2).

Achieved. With the introduction of the Escort Contract, young adults now go directly from Polmont to court and return directly. Cells are kept for those who go to court.

12.20 As long as the holding cubicles in reception remain, staff should ensure that information relating to routines is available in them (paragraph 5.5).

Achieved. First night information is displayed behind a perspex screen in each cubicle. While the use of cubicles continues to be inappropriate, the cubicles themselves were noticeably cleaner, in a good state of decoration and free from graffiti.

12.21 Private property should be opened in the presence of the owner in reception and accounted for there (paragraph 5.6).

Achieved. A new system is in place. It is also worth noting here that one matter in connection with mail was raised with the Governor.

12.22 Steps should be taken to display and have available in reception, information in languages other than English (paragraph 5.7).

Achieved. A folder outlining procedures to be followed is in place. Information in nine languages is contained in the folder. Nationality identity charts are also on display in the folder. Instructions on how to access an interpreter service are also detailed.

12.23 A multi-disciplinary case conferencing approach to prisoner management should be put in place as a matter of urgency (paragraph 5.13).

Partly achieved. Better Sentence Management procedures mean that information from the Links Centre is shared more consistently. However, multi-disciplinary case conferences, which would involve the young adults in decisions about how they are managed, do not take place routinely.

12.24 Consideration should be given to setting up a system which tracks the take up of appointments with local agencies made during the last week before liberation (paragraph 5.17).

Partly achieved. Agencies who attend the Links Centre report back to the Links Centre Manager about outcomes when individuals are dealt with successfully on release. There is no routine gathering of information on the take-up rate for appointments made via the Links Centre.

12.25 The improvement in the completion of Sentence Management records should be monitored and sustained (paragraph 5.20).

Achieved. Polmont's average compliance for completion of Assessments is 96%, and for Action Plans it is 95%.

12.26 There should be more systematic and considered involvement of personal officers in the Sentence Management process (paragraph 5.30).

Achieved. Sentence Management is carried out mainly in Iona Hall with smaller numbers involved in Lomond, Cramond and Nevis. There is a Personal Officer Scheme audited by the Hall Manager and the Manager responsible for Sentence Management, Programmes and Addictions.

12.27 Management may wish to review the need to have a target of all operational staff competent in the use of SDBA (paragraph 5.32).

Achieved. This has been reviewed.

12.28 Polmont needs to provide training for staff specific to the needs of working with their unique population (paragraph 5.32).

Partly achieved. In partnership with Youth Link Scotland, seven officers had successfully completed, and two officers were undertaking, the Foundation Studies Course in Youth Work, Informal Education and Community Learning. Two of the group who had completed were studying for a BA degree in Community Education. With the change in function of Nevis Hall, staff in that hall were being trained in substance misuse and presentation skills. All Nevis staff have attended STRADA at the Scottish Prison Service College and the local training delivered by Health Promotion and Central Scotland Police.

12.29 A system of audit should be put in place to support the Charter Mark Award achieved by the Health Centre and the results should be made available to other prisons (paragraph 6.6).

Achieved. The Charter Mark Award is now the Charter Mark Standard, and this requires a yearly audit.

12.30 The interview rooms used by nursing staff in Spey and Iona Halls are in need of redecoration (paragraph 6.16).

Not achieved.

12.31 The conditions in the main reception interview room used by nursing staff should be addressed (paragraph 6.17).

Not achieved.

12.32 A review of the inpatient rooms should be undertaken prior to the withdrawal of night nursing cover (paragraph 6.31).

Achieved. The inpatient rooms are not now used.

12.33 The SPS should consider ways of identifying young adults who would benefit from participating in the Care Programme Approach operated by the Mental Health Team (paragraph 6.34).

Ongoing. The fact that the young adults are from different parts of Scotland makes the logistics of this difficult.

12.34 A more secure method of storing dental instruments should be addressed as a matter of urgency (paragraph 6.39).

Achieved. All instruments are now locked away.

12.35 The dental services available should be made clear as part of the induction process and/or in information leaflets (paragraph 6.42).

Achieved.

12.36 Ways of addressing the waiting list for education and vocational training should be found (paragraph 7.1).

Achieved.

12.37 Chairs in two of the rooms in the learning centre require to be replaced (paragraph 7.4).

Achieved.

12.38 Accommodation used for educational programmes is insufficient (paragraph 7.4).

Partly achieved. The accommodation is still insufficient, although the Learning Centre is very proactive in seeking out and “borrowing” accommodation from other parts of the establishment. The existing accommodation is very well used and the Learning Centre is almost a victim of its own success in this respect.

12.39 Learning centre staff should consider how to implement a system of reflection and review of individual Learning Plans, particularly for longer-term prisoners (paragraph 7.5).

Achieved. This is an integral part of the new Learning, Skills and Employment (LSE) Contract which takes effect from 1 April 2005.

12.40 The learning centre should increase the focus on developing core skills within all classes (paragraph 7.6).

Not achieved. SPS does not accept this Point of Note.

12.41 Some non-accredited classes in the learning centre would benefit from a clearer focus on achievement (paragraph 7.6).

Not achieved. SPS does not accept this Point of Note.

12.42 A clear link between the Vocational Training and ICT work parties and the learning centre should be established (paragraph 7.8).

Achieved.

12.43 A majority of rooms in the Vocational Training accommodation were very hot and this should be addressed (paragraph 7.10).

Not achieved. No progress has been made given the new building work underway.

12.44 The youth workers should use a more systematic assessment tool to evaluate more fully the impact of their work (paragraph 7.16).

Achieved.

12.45 Management need to take forward their plans to make more effective use of the library resource (paragraph 7.18).

Achieved.

12.46 Consideration should be given to providing a subsidised shuttle bus for visitors from the railway station to the YOI (paragraph 8.7).

Achieved. A successful service was run for part of the year. At the time of inspection it was not operating due to circumstances outwith the control of the prison. It is hoped that the service can be reinstated when it is possible to do so.

12.47 The arrangements for the meetings of the Race Relations Group should be formalised and minutes taken (paragraphs 8.33 and 8.37).

Achieved.

12.48 Every effort should be made to escort young adults to the Chaplaincy Centre for arranged services (paragraph 8.39).

Achieved.

12.49 The prison should meet its objective that staff act in the role of mentor or coach to the young adults (paragraph 9.9).

Achieved.

12.50 A complaints book should be introduced to the kitchen (paragraph 9.12).

Not achieved.

12.51 Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that the results of the “Food Forum” which exists in each hall are relayed to the kitchen (paragraph 9.12).

Not achieved. It is also worth noting here that the portions of food are no bigger than they were last year, despite an attempt having been made to increase them. Serving larger helpings caused such an increase in cost that it had to be abandoned.

12.52 Management needs to provide a laundry service appropriate to the needs of the whole prisoner population as a matter of urgency (paragraph 9.15).

Ongoing. Funding has been approved for a new laundry which is planned to open in April 2005. In the meantime, laundry will be carried out under arrangement with Shotts Prison and a private contractor.

4. NEW DEVELOPMENTS

New Buildings

The new build project is now well underway, with the first of two Activities buildings due for completion in the summer of 2005. Work on the second Activities building will then follow. This will allow the existing worksheds to be demolished to make way for the second new houseblock. New Gate, ECR, Administration, Reception and Visits facilities will follow.

Nevis Hall

At the time of the last inspection the Drug Unit was located in Argyll Hall. It was not operating successfully. In September 2004 a new Drug Prevention Centre was set up in Nevis Hall. The Centre is staffed by Phoenix House, Cranstoun and Polmont. As a result, the very bad conditions in Nevis Hall identified in last year's report have been addressed. The Hall is much cleaner, dining and hygiene arrangements have improved and there is a much more positive feel in the hall. The "down-grades" previously held there have been dispersed around the prison, and this appears to have been done successfully and with little disruption. And the addiction service itself has improved dramatically. The hall has a capacity of 60 and there were 57 young adults living there during inspection. All young adults in Nevis have been assessed by Cranstoun Drug Services, and are volunteers – they know why they are there and they want to be there. The hall has a mix of long-term and short-term young adults.

A four-tier programme is in place:

1. Assessment and understanding of the rules of the Centre.
2. Awareness of the effect of drugs and alcohol on the body.
3. Awareness of the effects of drugs and alcohol in the wider social context.
4. Self help, research and peer support.

Young adults who have reached the fourth tier are offered the opportunity to lead groups of other young adults at tiers two and three – with the support of staff. This is innovative. Another innovation is a meeting which is held every morning, involving all of the young

adults. This provides the opportunity to talk about the interventions and address any problems arising.

The Centre will be evaluated during the course of the year.