



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

Report on The Open Estate

August 2005

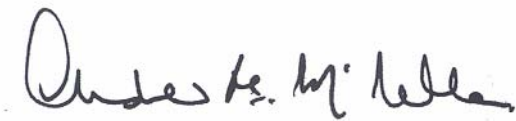


SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

The Scottish Ministers

In accordance with my terms of reference as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, I forward a report of a full inspection carried out at the Open Estate between 9-13 May 2005.

Five recommendations and a number of other observations are made.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew R C McLellan'.

ANDREW R C McLELLAN
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
for Scotland

August 2005

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1. PREAMBLE

1.1 At the request of the Governor the inspection of the Open Estate planned for 2004 was postponed. The main reason for this was the belief of the Governor that his prolonged absence from the Open Estate on other SPS duties meant that the inspection was likely to find that matters criticised in the last report had not been acted on. This was an unusual request, but in the circumstances, a reasonable one.

1.2 The letter from the Chief Inspector of Prisons to the Chief Executive of SPS agreeing to the request said *I think it likely that an inspection in October will find repeated promises that the return of the Governor to post means that this matter or that is only now being taken up, and will be seen very differently in a few months. I think it better to postpone the inspection to a time when I would be entitled to expect to find evidence of real progress.* The letter concluded *If I had carried out the Inspection at the date announced I would have been pursuing the principal question raised in the report of 2003: the question of the “preparation of release which is actually at this point available for prisoners”. I believe that this is a question which is not only a question for the Governor and his staff; but is also a question for the Prison Board about the purpose of the Open Estate. It is a question to which I shall be hoping to find encouraging answers when I carry out a full inspection next year.*

1.3 There are some good and encouraging things in this report, as there have been in previous reports on the Open Estate. But the report still raises serious concerns.

1.4 At Castle Huntly it was remarkable to discover new arrangements for locking prisoners in their sections or dormitories for large parts of the working day. (It is different at Noranside, where prisoners have access to areas of the grounds). It is now not unusual for prisoners to spend more time locked up when they are transferred to an open prison than they did when they were in a closed prison. The reason given by staff, prisoners and the Visiting Committee for this development was the absence of available work opportunities in which prisoners might spend a useful day. Since most prisoners coming into the Open Estate arrive first in Castle Huntly, it is disappointing and extremely frustrating for them to find that a move to an open prison from a closed prison brings with it, in one aspect at least, a greater restriction of liberty. This is particularly difficult for those long-term prisoners who come to the Open Estate from the relatively relaxed environment of a “top-end”.

1.5 This frustration is made very much worse by the living conditions to which they come. Most of them will be accustomed to living in single-cell accommodation; none will have been living more than two per cell. Once they come to Castle Huntly they live in a dormitory where conditions are miserable. It is no surprise that prisoners regularly speak of a move to the Open Estate as a step back. But the dormitory conditions are more serious still, when prisoners regularly spend hours of the working day locked inside them. Prisoners, prison staff, and prison management all indicated that that was a recipe for drug taking. It is likely to be very difficult for a prisoner who arrives from a single cell into a dormitory where drugs are being taken to resist the temptation to revert to drug taking habits.

1.6 Extended time locked in cells and five-bedded dormitories are features only of Castle Huntly and are not found at Noranside. This illustrates a difficulty about this report. Throughout the report it is obvious that the experience of prisoners on one site is different from the experience of prisoners on the other. “Integration” between the sites has been a management goal since 2001: but it does not provide the same conditions and treatment of prisoners on both sites.

1.7 The report is very positive about some things on both sites. Food is good, and in Castle Huntly it is as good as in any Scottish prison. Everywhere the Open Estate is clean and tidy; with the exception of the dormitories the accommodation is good. Healthcare provision is commended, particularly in Castle Huntly. Sentence Management at Noranside has been improved. Initial arrangements for Throughcare at Castle Huntly are good.

1.8 Special mention is made of the outside work placements on both sites. These placements are set up by the prison to offer an opportunity for prisoners near the end of their sentences who have been assessed as suitable to do daily work in the community. The report refers to charity shops, a blacksmith’s shop, and full-time college courses. These placements are of real benefit to prisoners: employers were without exception enthusiastic about the arrangements.

1.9 Two initiatives at Noranside have the potential to make significant contributions to preparation for release. A new course has begun within the Independent Living Unit. This course is specifically designed to meet some immediate needs of prisoners near the end of

long sentences, who are facing release into a community very different from prison, and possibly very different from the community they remember before imprisonment. The course deals with healthy eating and cooking (prisoners on the course cook their own meals and shop for them), paths into employment, money matters; and it offers prisoners opportunities to discuss with staff their own particular concerns before release. If the course succeeds in what it is attempting to do it will be a significant contribution to preparation for release. The other initiative is a Garden Centre. At the time of inspection this was on the point of being ready for business. It has already provided training in horticulture for prisoners and will continue to do so. It is planned that it will also provide a limited number of prisoners with training in sales and customer assistance; for they will be dealing with the public who will be the customers at the Centre.

1.10 The report of 2003 was critical of the availability of work places within the prison, and at Castle Huntly in particular. *Where there had been an employment centre gainfully employing over forty prisoners every day, the building was now empty, with the prisoners added to other parties or remaining in the wings.* It is shameful that this sentence should be as true in 2005 as it was in 2003. The absence of work for prisoners to do appears to be the primary reason that prisoners in an open prison spend long periods locked up, with the unhappy consequences already referred to. It is also a significant contributor to the daily boredom of many prisoners.

1.11 Reference has already been made to the connection perceived between dormitory accommodation and drug abuse. Recent years have seen a rise in the number of those testing positive for drugs in the Open Estate. There may be several reasons for this, including a change in policy which no longer automatically excludes from the Open Estate prisoners who test positive for drugs. It may be that it is a sensible change in policy which recognises that many prisoners near release do have drug problems. But it is only a sensible policy if it accompanied by a sensible amount of support at the Open Estate for prisoners who want to stop abusing drugs. The report shows that such support is not sufficiently available.

1.12 There was talk throughout the inspection of the possible impact of a proposed change to the prisoner population, by the imminent opening of a new block at Castle Huntly, with provision for 141 prisoners. The report indicates concern about the readiness of the prison

for this large increase: a number of services including visits, healthcare, social work and the laundry are not prepared. Nor have staff been identified.

1.13 The report of 2002 and the report of 2003 posed as the principal question *How does an open prison prepare prisoners for release?* On the one hand this report shows the contribution made by outside work placements and the beginnings of a good local course. On the other hand, this report is critical of work opportunities on both sites, of Sentence Management at Castle Huntly, of drug support on both sites, of educational provision; and it is extremely critical of the move towards increasing the time prisoners spend locked up. These are serious matters, at the centre of what might be expected of preparation for release.

1.14 The report of 2002 and the report of 2003 also said *The decision to integrate the two establishments provides the opportunity to reassess the purpose of open prisons and build on good practice developed over the years. To achieve this, a clear commitment has to be made by the Scottish Prison Service to the two establishments, based, in our opinion, on the premise that open prisons must be dedicated to preparing prisoners for release.* The Scottish Prison Service has shown its commitment to Castle Huntly by doubling the size of the prison with the building of the new block. What is still not clear as a result of this report is that there is an energetic commitment to open prisons as a preparation for release. Open prisons are in a unique position to do this, because of the opportunities they provide for prisoner responsibility, for increased family contact, for working in the community and for specialised focused course work and individual work with those who are near the end of long sentences. When reducing re-offending is at the centre of the public debate about prisons, the unique contribution which open prisons might make is not being made.

2. POPULATION, ACCOMMODATION AND ROUTINES

Population

2.1 Castle Huntly and Noranside make up the Open Estate. Both prisons hold low supervision adult male prisoners. All prisoners have been assessed as suitable to serve part of their sentence in open conditions. Castle Huntly has a capacity of 156, Noranside has a capacity of 135. Prisoners are initially allocated to Castle Huntly. A new Houseblock for 141 additional prisoners was planned to open at Castle Huntly. This report indicates concern about the readiness of the prison for this large increase. **It is recommended that these concerns are addressed.**

Accommodation and Routines

Castle Huntly

2.2 There are two accommodation wings in Castle Huntly. Wallace Wing has eight five-person dormitories and 40 single rooms. Bruce Wing has seven five-person dormitories, one double room and 39 single rooms. The prison therefore has a capacity of 156. It held 144 prisoners on the first day of inspection, with more arriving during the week. Statistics show that the prison generally stays very close to capacity. Prisoners are usually transferred in from the national 'top-ends' at Greenock, Edinburgh and Perth.

2.3 The standard of the accommodation is generally good with two notable exceptions: the five-person dormitories and the recreation facilities. The dormitories are dirty, dingy and claustrophobic, and are too small to provide any privacy. There is little space for personal items. Prisoners living there said they felt tense and frustrated. Some prisoners, prison staff and prison management said that drug taking in the prison tended to be focused in the dormitories. Although this is anecdotal evidence it was nevertheless a view expressed consistently.

2.4 Unless they are life sentence prisoners, new admissions are normally located in a dormitory until a single cell is available. It can take between three and six months for a single cell to become available, which prisoners said could be very frustrating.

2.5 The standard of the dormitories falls well short of the accommodation prisoners will have lived in before they come to Castle Huntly: the norm in closed long-term establishments is a single cell with its own toilet and television. The beds in the dormitories are separated by partitions, but offer no privacy.

2.6 Recreation facilities are also very poor in Castle Huntly. Pool tables have torn cloths and broken cues. There is no communal television area; only limited access to the gymnasium; and strict timings on when an individual can leave the wings. A collection of mountain bikes was located adjacent to the accommodation but these had not been used for some months. Ways should be found to allow prisoners to use the bicycles.

2.7 It was surprising to find how restrictive Castle Huntly was in allowing prisoners to move around the prison: not what might be expected in an “open” prison. During the working day movement was particularly restricted. Section doors, room doors and dormitories were locked. A number of reasons were given for this. It was claimed by staff that some prisoners sneak back to bed instead of going to work. Other staff said that prisoners had to be locked away so that cleaners were not stopped from doing their work by people getting in their way. A third reason given was to limit movement because of the amount of drug activity in the prison. Whatever the reason, the very “closed” feel of the prison was disappointing. **It is recommended that the prison finds ways of allowing Castle Huntly prisoners greater freedom of movement within the prison.**

Noranside

2.8 There are six accommodation wings in Noranside. ‘A’ and ‘B’ wings have a combination of single and double rooms. ‘C’, ‘D’, ‘E’ and ‘F’ wings are all single rooms. There are 97 single rooms and 19 double rooms, giving a capacity of 135 available places. On the first day of inspection there were 139 prisoners living in Noranside.

2.9 Accommodation in Noranside was well kept and clean: in direct contrast to Castle Huntly. Procedures were also in place to allow prisoners to move around the accommodation with the aim of ending up in the Independent Living Unit (described below). A system was

in place which allowed life sentence prisoners to occupy single cells as they became available.

2.10 The development of the Independent Living Unit at Noranside has brought together the buildings formerly known as Cameron House and Alba House. There is accommodation for 24 prisoners. The accommodation is very good. Each prisoner has his own room, and there is considerable freedom of movement.

2.11 A ten-week course of pre-release preparation was just beginning at the time of the inspection. The course has been devised and produced at Noranside, largely by the members of staff who lead its delivery. The areas covered include health and hygiene, cooking, employment issues, social skills and personal development and money matters.

2.12 Prisoners are selected for the course on the basis of need. Those considered in most need are given priority for places. Those in greatest need are likely to be those who have been in prison for a very long time, and those with little family support.

2.13 Throughout the course prisoners buy and cook their own food. This involves planning and shopping, as well as the preparation of the food. Shopping has to be within a limited budget.

2.14 Staff involved in the course are very enthusiastic. Prisoners on the course were not all keen to take part when originally selected. However, prisoners participating in the early stages of the course had become extremely positive: several echoed the phrase *this will really prepare you for release*.

2.15 At the time of the inspection the course was only in its second week: it is too early to make a considered judgment on its value. There can be no doubt, however, that the development of the Independent Living Unit might come to be seen as a significant part of an answer to the question posed in previous reports *how does an open prison prepare people for release?*

Continuous Cell Occupancy

2.16 Much energy and time is currently being invested in planning to increase the capacity of the Open Estate by a process of Continuous Cell Occupancy. Currently around 25% of the prisoner population go on home leave each weekend. The plans being developed are to change this by introducing a seven-day home leave and, working on the principle of 25% of prisoners being on leave each week, to increase the population by 25% in order to ensure the prison always runs at 100% capacity. Consequently, four prisoners will be allocated nominally to every three bed spaces on the basis that one of the four should be on leave each week. This proposal will be monitored.

3. CUSTODY AND GOOD ORDER

Security and Safety

3.1 There were no reported instances of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the past year and prisoners said that they felt safe and that bullying was not a problem. Management confirmed that prisoners who were coming to the end of their sentences and had achieved open status had too much to lose by becoming involved in violent or bullying behaviour.

3.2 There had been one suicide (subject to Fatal Accident Inquiry) in Castle Huntly in the past year. There had been one instance of self-harm in Noranside in the same period. ACT procedures had been initiated on two other occasions (once at each site).

3.3 There had been 22 absconds from Castle Huntly and 11 from Noranside in the past year. There had been 22 failures to return to Castle Huntly and 17 to Noranside in the same period.

Prisoner Complaints Procedure

3.4 Prisoner Complaint Forms are kept in a central location in both prisons although there were none available at Castle Huntly at time of inspection. Both sites should ensure that forms are available and accessible. There was evidence available in Noranside to indicate robust logging systems were in place.

Prisoner Disciplinary System

3.5 Most prisoners entering the disciplinary system did so for testing positive for drugs or for having illegal substances in their possession. Proper procedures were followed in Orderly Room hearings and all documentation viewed was correct and issued within appropriate timescales.

Relationships

3.6 Relationships in the Open Estate are very good. In the 2004 Prisoner Survey the overall rating for relationships was 94% positive in Noranside and 92% in Castle Huntly. These good relationships were observed during the inspection.

4. ADDICTIONS

Levels of Drug Use

4.1 Addiction issues were presented as constituting a very complex problem in the Open Estate. Staff and prisoners stated that there was a high level of drug misuse. They believed that the change in the previous policy (which had ensured that if people tested positive for drugs they were returned to closed conditions – “the one-strike policy”) had led to greater drug misuse. This change had taken place in 2002

4.2 From all tests carried out, the most common failure is for opiates (smoking heroin) - 75% of positive tests, cannabis - 42% of positive tests and benzodiazepines - 20%. A significant number of individuals test positive for more than one substance. There are more recreational drugs such as amphetamines (8%) and cocaine (7%) now being used. The level of refusals to take tests is not significant. Over the last year only six out of 306 tests were refused. All individuals testing positive are referred to Cranstoun Drug Services.

4.3 Scrutiny of Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) statistics (not including testing on suspicion, etc.) showed that Castle Huntly and Noranside have approximately the same level of failed tests – 28% for Noranside and 29% for Castle Huntly in 2004-05. These figures are high: the average figure across the SPS in the same period was 18%.

4.4 Risk assessment testing, rarely undertaken in the past (nine in 2001-02 in Castle Huntly), has risen significantly in both sites (156 in 2004-05 in Castle Huntly). This is now regularly undertaken for people prior to going on Home Leave, if the prisoner has already failed a test, or where a prisoner might be using machinery.

Managing Addictions

4.5 Both sites manage addictions in a positive way e.g. carrying out searches. Noranside staff are more likely to use intelligence to guard against the trafficking of drugs, to undertake risk assessment and suspicion testing and to provide support for prisoners – for example they have a drug addiction team with eight officers identified as addictions officers. There was a

consensus that this is very effective. Prisoners report that officers in Castle Huntly are “not interested” in assisting individuals with addiction needs.

4.6 Despite some staff and prisoner concerns outlined at paragraph 4.1, the new policy on the management of prisoners in open prisons who test positive for drugs is now well established.

4.7 It has been difficult to manage the provision of drug free areas or, as they are now called, addiction support areas, in the Open Estate. This is the pattern in many prisons, since nationally about 20% of prisoners indicated that they continued to use drugs while in a drug free area (Prisoner Survey, 2004).

Strategy and Procedures

4.8 The Open Estate is represented on the Angus and Perth and Kinross Drug Action Teams and the local Drugs Forums.

4.9 An Addiction Strategy was produced in April 2003, although some staff were not familiar with it. It should be updated and an implementation or action plan developed, clearly setting out identified tasks, timescales, funding and individuals to carry out the tasks.

4.10 An outline paper on the integrated care pathway of addiction treatment at the Open Estate was provided, but it should be developed in more detail.

4.11 A draft “Open Estate Addiction Policy Implementation” paper was also provided but it did not relate clearly enough to the policy produced in April 2003, and appeared to be a combination of proposals, actions taken and a list of deterrents/incentives.

Addictions Staffing

4.12 The lead for addictions work is taken by the Addictions Co-ordinator, with an Addictions Caseworker (Cranstoun), Addictions Nurse (half day per week, based in Perth), and an Inclusion Administrator. Support is also provided by the two generic nurses at Castle Huntly and Noranside, and three residential staff at Noranside.

4.13 MDT is carried out by a small number of prison officers in Castle Huntly, but a larger number of staff have been trained in Noranside. The smaller number of all tests undertaken in Castle Huntly (302) than in Noranside (371) in 2004-05 reflects this, despite the fact that Castle Huntly holds more prisoners. The unit in Castle Huntly was sometimes unable to meet the 10% random testing required.

4.14 The MDT unit in Castle Huntly has moved to a more central area where individuals can be viewed at all times - as proposed in the 2002 HMIP Report. The MDT staff record information to a high standard and provide valuable information on drugs used.

4.15 The Drug Strategy Team, which was set up in 2002 to cover both sites and was chaired by the Deputy Governor, no longer meets. Castle Huntly Addictions Management Team comprises the Head of Inclusion, Custody Manager, the Cranstoun Team Leader, Addictions and Programme Co-ordinator, Inclusion Manager, Inclusion Administrator and others, but does not appear to have met in 2005. The Drug Strategy Team for both sites and the Castle Huntly Addictions Management Team should be reconvened.

Treatment, Support and Interventions

4.16 There has been a significant increase since the last inspection report in 2002 in the level of treatment provided in both prisons including Naltrexone prescribing in Castle Huntly; a Methodone maintenance programme; and the provision of a part-time addiction nurse and a more generic nursing service.

4.17 The work of associated professional organisations and staff such as Cranstoun, social work, healthcare staff and MDT officers is well co-ordinated on an informal basis on both sites, although there is some tension between professional and prison staff at Castle Huntly and between the healthcare staff and other staff at Noranside. Formal meetings have been discontinued because of the pressure of work on all staff, particularly social workers.

4.18 However, the level of formal support and interventions for prisoners is not as positive as in the last HMIP report: and 141 new prisoners are about to arrive. Staff are very

conscious of the need to assist prisoners' return to an environment outside the prison which they associate with drug misuse and where drugs are widely available.

4.19 While on paper there appears to be a range of interventions, in reality provision is more limited. The full-time Cranstoun worker offers one-to-one support, motivational interviewing and harm reduction on both sites. Advocacy and referral to other community agencies can be provided. Some programmes such as SMART and Alcohol Awareness are run, but not as frequently as needed, because of pressure of work on staff. Formal SPS annual targets for programmes have however almost been met.

4.20 Rooms around the prison and the visitor centre in Castle Huntly are used for addictions work, although the Links Centre will be used at Castle Huntly when completed. A small Links Centre in Noranside is well utilised.

4.21 Cranstoun Drug Services have one office in the main Castle Huntly building (which prisoners do not find helpful because of the proximity to senior management offices) and are due to move to the Links Centre when it is completed. In Noranside, they have attractively furnished offices separately located, which ensures easy access for prisoners.

4.22 In 2004-05 177 assessments were completed using the Common Addictions Assessment Recording Tool (CAART) and care plans completed. The case workers also undertake one-to-one sessions and are increasingly involved in ongoing support work, rather than just undertaking assessment work. Cranstoun Services are also able to offer external counselling during Home Leaves or Extended Day Release and this is very successful.

Alcohol Misuse

4.23 Testing for alcohol misuse takes place in Castle Huntly and there has only been one failure in the most recent 80 tests. Testing does not take place in Noranside. Alcohol misuse is not regarded as a problem in the Open Estate. Alcohol awareness courses are run by prison staff and will be extended with the new contract for extended addiction services. Prisoners at Castle Huntly can attend Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Several programmes such as Guide to Sensible Drinking (in both Castle Huntly and Noranside) have been run in the past but are not currently available.

5. PRISONER MANAGEMENT

Reception

5.1 The Reception at Castle Huntly is now the Reception point for the Open Estate. At the time of inspection this was a room in the main administration area. The area is fairly drab but functional. Admissions come to the Open Estate on a planned basis and only from other prisons, consequently Reception is staffed on an “as needs” basis. Prisoners spend the minimum amount of time there.

5.2 A new Reception was in the final stages of preparation. It will include a mailing area, admission area, storage and associated services within the building where the Links Centre is planned. This will improve the Reception process when it is operational.

Induction

5.3 The majority of prisoners coming to the Open Estate are admitted to Castle Huntly where they undertake a four-week assessment/induction programme. Only in exceptional circumstances will a prisoner go straight to Noranside. If this happens an induction specific to individual needs will be created.

5.4 In autumn 2004 the induction programme changed. It moved from a residential function to a team approach facilitated by staff from residential, activities, programmes: as well as by specialists and outside agencies. The new approach has settled in well. Prisoners were able to describe in detail how well they had been inducted. The one disappointment for them was that the residential input often didn't happen because staff didn't turn up. Management should ensure that residential officers fulfil their role in prisoner induction.

5.5 During induction an admission screen form is completed. This is a modified version of the SPS core screen tool specific to the needs of prisoners in the Open Estate. At the end of the induction period the Prisoner Progression Plan (PPP) meeting takes place. This was described by prisoners as participative and useful. The main element of the PPP meeting is the completion of the Community Access Risk Assessment (CARA). This will initiate a prisoner's access to Home Leaves, work or college placements, transfer to Noranside or any

other significant element of his ongoing management. Although the system is relatively new it seems to work very well. The PPP and CARA are useful tools in recording the Sentence Management of prisoners in the Open Estate.

5.6 Induction is now better organised and delivered much more consistently in the Open Estate.

Sentence Management

5.7 This has been an area of considerable concern in the last two inspections and remains so. The performance at the two sites is still frustratingly different. While Noranside has now improved its performance, (albeit from a zero base), Castle Huntly's performance has declined.

5.8 One improvement has been the appointment of an Administrative Assistant shared between the two sites: the actual organisation of Sentence Management is good. Prisoners are identified on admission, a data base has been created and a monthly list of prisoners due for Risk and Needs Assessment (RNA), Action Planning or Review is produced. Prior to staff beginning any work, the Administrative Assistant ensures that all necessary reports and materials are completed, collated and available on file.

5.9 There are trained Risk and Needs Assessment (RNA) Officers based at each site who carry out the Assessments. This is done as part of normal shift duties, and as a result officers are frequently detailed to other duties at short notice at the expense of Sentence Management tasks. At Noranside, the shift pattern allows RNA Officers to be detailed on a day shift to carry out Sentence Management. Demands to cover other duties mean that in any month, as few as 16% of the days planned for Sentence Management actually take place.

5.10 At Castle Huntly, Action Planning is a role assigned to Personal Officers. From the figures available, and examination of a sample of folders, this does not happen. The reason given is the routine deployment to other duties and the overload of administrative work on Personal Officers. It was very noticeable during the inspection of Castle Huntly that staff spent much of their shifts in offices completing paperwork. This may also be a contributory factor to the long periods of lock-up which have become common. It may also be a reason

for the non-completion of Sentence Management Action Plans which are the responsibility of Personal Officers. It is another area where one site has a relatively good system in place while the other site of the same prison does not.

5.11 The figures detailed below are the total figures for the first four months of 2005 and illustrate outcomes against the 'Elements of Sentence Management'.

Sentence Management Element		Castle Huntly		Noranside	
		(A) Expected	(B) Completed on Time	(A) Expected	(B) Completed on Time
(1)	Initial Interview	125	117	-	59
(2)	Psychometrics	93	39	19	31
(3)	Screening Tools	43	23	-	-
(4)	PBRs	31	23	-	25
(5)	Initial Risk & Needs Assessment	-	-	-	-
(6)	Action Plan	-	-	-	-
(7)	Review Action Plan	33	0	25	10
(8)	Repeat Risk & Needs Assessment	31	13	33	20
(9)	Repeat Action Plan	31	2	-	-
(10)	Summary Risk & Needs Assessment	21	12	26	18
(11)	Summary Action Plan	19	2	26	18

5.12 These figures show the varying success in meeting Sentence Management targets during 2005. This situation is much improved at Noranside. The improvement in the Sentence Management arrangements at Noranside should be maintained. The arrangements for Sentence Management at Castle Huntly should be improved.

5.13 With the planned increase in the overall population at the Open Estate it is unclear whether the resource requirements of Sentence Management have been assessed. It has become almost routine for HMIP Reports to raise issues about Sentence Management. **It is recommended that the operation of the Sentence Management Scheme nationally should be reviewed and that the resource implications are clearly identified.**

Throughcare

5.14 Arrangements for Throughcare are one of the areas where significant evidence of integration can be seen. However, when asked about arrangements prior to transfer to the Open Estate, prisoners report a very mixed experience of what information is available, and the accuracy of that information. Some prisoners indicated that no information was made

available, others that the information was inaccurate. Clearly, prisoners need to be well informed about the Open Estate prior to transferring there. **It is recommended that a consistent system for providing prisoners with information about the Open Estate is put in place across the SPS.**

5.15 Prisoners arriving at Castle Huntly remain in the prison for approximately four weeks, during which time they receive induction and an initial job allocation. The Community Access Risk Assessment and Prisoner Progression Planning Meetings are completed. The CARA provides the focus for the Prisoner Progression Planning Meeting. At this the CARA is considered by a Senior Management and, if no objections are identified, the prisoner is eligible to apply for a Community Placement and for Home Leave.

5.16 The PPP is chaired by the Inclusion Manager from Castle Huntly, and is attended by the Programmes Manager, a representative from the Residential function, and the Social Inclusion Administrator. Prisoners attend and a discussion takes place on their situation and any perceived risks and needs. Issues around education, employability, addictions, family, and accommodation are all discussed and an initial plan formulated. This may include referral to agencies and functions within the prison or to visiting external agencies and service providers (education, Cranstoun, programmes, Jobcentreplus or other employability services, Healthcare etc). In each case the onus is put on the individual to make or attend appointments and to meet with social inclusion or other staff. In turn, any staff actions are agreed. A plan is completed and signed. To ensure that agreed actions happen, the administrator lists the actions separately for monitoring progress and a copy of the plan is placed in the Sentence Management folder. During the PPP which was observed, prisoners attending were treated in a relaxed and respectful manner and had ample opportunity to contribute.

5.17 The limitation of the system is that it is fairly superficial. Prisoners are referred to the agencies or interventions which are available. Solutions tend to revolve around how the prisoner's needs can fit the jobs, programmes placements or support available, rather than recognising that these might not be sufficient for every need. Where a prisoner has more complex needs it is arguable whether or not the PPP would be able to respond. Despite this, the CARA and PPP have the potential provide a sound basis for Throughcare. This is a straightforward system which has been created for and meets the needs of the Open Estate.

5.18 Less satisfying is the range of opportunities available. This is examined at length elsewhere in this report. Reports by HMIP have noted the success of the Links Centres which SPS has opened in most establishments. These encourage and facilitate partnerships with other agencies. It is frustrating that at the time of the last inspection at Castle Huntly, the Inspectorate noted that work parties had been closed to allow the large industrial shed to be converted into more suitable accommodation to provide employability opportunities and a Links Centre. Some 18 months later this has still not happened. The inertia around this issue is damaging in terms of the opportunities available to prisoners. It could be argued that if any prison should have a Links Centre providing a focus for community agencies, the Open Estate which prepares long-term prisoners for release, should be it. It is somewhat ironic that during the time there has been such disappointing progress with the Links Centre, a further 141 places for prisoners have been agreed and work underway. **It is recommended that the Links Centre is completed as a matter of urgency.**

Life Sentence Prisoners

5.19 There were 38 life sentence prisoners in the Open Estate during inspection. A residential officer post is now dedicated to managing lifer issues. This includes all lifer tribunals, downgrade assessments and forward plans for all returns to closed conditions. This officer also co-ordinates parole management. He has one Administrative Assistant.

5.20 Lifer and parole work is significant. In 2003-04 there were 79 tribunals: in 2004-05 there were 83. This accounted for 50% of all lifer tribunals across the SPS. These tribunals do not always take place in the Open Estate so travelling to another prison is often a feature of the tribunal experience.

5.21 In undertaking downgrade assessments the priority is to try and manage the prisoner in the Open Estate. Where this is inappropriate a forward plan for the prisoner must accompany him back to closed conditions. Timescales are currently met, and the performance at tribunals is consistent. This is important work currently carried out by a very small department. The resources available is another area which needs to be examined with the imminent arrival of so many more prisoners. The heavy workload has meant that it has

not been possible to organise lifer meetings and self help groups. This would be a useful addition to the Open Estate.

Community Liaison and Placements

5.22 Outside work placements are a key part of the preparation for release attempted in the Open Estate. Previous reports have made very positive observations about the operation of these placements: so does this report.

5.23 There is a wide range of employers, wide both in geographical spread and in the nature of the work. Appropriate health and safety checks are carried out by the prison before a placement begins. Prisoners are carefully selected for placements, so that only about 5% do not complete the placement successfully.

5.24 An examination was made of some of the paperwork associated with the placements. It was found to be highly appropriate, giving the employer a clear understanding of the terms of the placement, the process being followed and the procedure in case of difficulties. The paperwork used on both sites is the same. Prison staff have good personal contact with the employers. In general, on placements prisoners have good relationships with their colleagues and are given quite a high level of trust.

5.25 During the inspection visits were made to two of the Noranside placements.

5.26 At Angus College six prisoners are attending full-time courses. Five are taking part in a one-year course which is an introduction to the construction industry, with a significant practical component. Without exception it is a good experience for them: “real experience”, “a proper qualification”, “treated with respect”. It is also important to note that it is a good experience for the College. Both college staff and other college students enjoy the presence of the prisoners on the course. Indeed, the lecturer praised them for being “good role models” for the other students in terms of their behaviour in the classroom.

5.27 There is uncertainty about the future of placements on this course. It may be that one effect of integration between the two sites is that college placements will in future be carried out from Castle Huntly. This particular course may not be available in Dundee. Prisoners

expressed regret that their good experience might not be possible for those who will participate in future placements.

5.28 The other visit was to a charity shop, where two prisoners are on placement. They spoke very appreciatively of their work. There was experience of the whole range of activity associated with the running of a shop, not least customer relations with the general public. Prisoners are trusted with money, and are given responsibility for certain operations within the shop.

5.29 Comments from others working in the shop were equally positive. No safety issues had arisen, prisoners treated other workers with respect and were treated with respect. It was clear that a happy relationship exists between prisoners and others in the shop. The management view was that the prisoners are “of real benefit”.

5.30 During the inspection visits were also made to two Castle Huntly placements.

5.31 One prisoner works with a blacksmith. He is very well integrated into the work force and is shown considerable trust by the firm. It is clear that his work is itself of a high standard: his supervisor spoke very appreciatively of his contribution. For the prisoner the placement is a very positive experience of hard and interesting work, in which he is given real responsibility.

5.32 For the employer there is a significant benefit in the reliability and skill of the prisoner. However, he was clear that the presence of the placement was not a replacement for taking on another employee. He felt well supported in the placement by the prison.

5.33 The other visit was to a charity shop. One prisoner is on placement at this shop. The affirmative comments made about the charity shop placement from Noranside apply equally to this placement.

6. HEALTHCARE

Castle Huntly

6.1 Arrangements for healthcare at Castle Huntly are excellent. The Prisoner Survey revealed high levels of satisfaction, backed up by Inspectorate interviews with healthcare staff, prisoners and prison staff.

6.2 Access and waiting times to see the doctor, nurse, and other practitioners such as the dentist were all very acceptable. The doctor and nurse are experienced and committed, and well supported by management (from HMP Perth). Good links have been developed with local services such as the physiotherapy clinic at Kings Cross Hospital and the Diabetic nursing specialism at Ninewells Hospital. The Integrated Blood Borne Virus Service is an area of **good practice**.

6.3 Pharmacy arrangements are very satisfactory.

6.4 While the health centre itself is safe and clean, there was a lack of storage space and the soundproofing was inadequate. The lack of a waiting room made confidentiality difficult.

6.5 There was a general uncertainty in both Castle Huntly and Noranside about the impact of the additional prisoners.

Noranside

6.6 Arrangements at Noranside are also very good, although levels of prisoner satisfaction recorded in the Prisoner Survey are slightly lower than in the previous year.

6.7 Access and waiting times to see the doctor, nurse and other practitioners were all acceptable. There was very good access to the physiotherapist. The provision of health promotion initiatives was very good and the two “well person” days per year are an example of **good practice**.

6.8 The health centre itself is reasonable although if services expand to include the introduction of methadone dispensing, additional storage and working space will be required.

6.9 There is presently no administrative support at Noranside or Castle Huntly.

7. LEARNING, SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Background

7.1 The new contract for the provision of learning, skills and employability (LSE) services for both Castle Huntly and Noranside had started on 1 April with Motherwell College. The prison was adapting both to the new provisions within the contract, and to the fact that Motherwell College was a new provider. In August 2004, the prison had prepared a development plan for LSE entitled *Pathways to Employment*. This had many commendable features, but was at an early stage of implementation.

Learning Centre

7.2 In Castle Huntly the learning centre was managed by a Learning Centre Manager, who was working on a 0.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) contract. There were 1.4 FTE additional staff. In Noranside the Learning Centre Manager was on sick leave and had been for significant periods prior to the inspection. Two tutors were employed to deliver learning support. Learning centre staff were in the process of being transferred under TUPE arrangements to the new LSE provider. Staff were experienced in the prison setting and suitably qualified. The learning centres were approved to deliver a large range of different learning modules.

7.3 The Castle Huntly learning centre was situated near prisoner accommodation. There were three classroom areas and an arts and crafts room, with staff able to access an additional room in the facility on occasion. The learning centre was to be relocated to the new Links Centre facility later this year. Prisoners had access to a good number of computers, but they were unsuitable for modern computing packages. Motherwell College had plans to replace a number of these with modern PCs. Staff had access to a comprehensive learning resource base with a good range of learning materials.

7.4 Noranside Learning Centre was in a small, well-equipped facility adjacent to the workshops. The learning centre provided for three classrooms and a small arts room. This room had no sink or water supply and was therefore not a suitable environment. In addition, staff were unable to access the high quality workshop facilities in other areas of the prison for

craft activities. One classroom had eight computers and a further six computers were being installed by Motherwell College. Tutors had been unable to access software to support learners with additional support needs such as dyslexia. The learning centre had no photocopier which required teaching staff to use the administrative centre to copy learning materials.

7.5 Learning centre staff in Castle Huntly promoted their opportunities to prisoners during a short input in induction. Teaching staff at Noranside were no longer directly involved in the induction process and needed to develop mechanisms for engaging with prisoners, particularly those with literacy and numeracy needs. Learning activities were promoted through posters in the wings but there were insufficient mechanisms for teaching staff to meet other prison staff or to promote learning opportunities to prisoners. Under the previous contract, tutors had discontinued the use of individual learning plans to set learners' goals and review progress. ILPs were now carried out at induction in Castle Huntly. Transfer of information relating to prisoners' previous learning experiences was often poor, particularly courses undertaken and achieved during time in prison. This was a barrier to staff advising prisoners about the appropriateness of current courses of study. No mechanisms were in place to prioritise provision for prisoners with literacy and numeracy needs.

7.6 All learning was self-directed and supported by tutors where required. Learning opportunities were available to those prisoners who chose to take it up, with only a short waiting list for specific IT courses in Castle Huntly. In Noranside, a relatively small number of prisoners opted for provision in the Learning Centre on two or more sessions each week. In Castle Huntly, around 40 prisoners (26%) accessed education in any week. Prisoners interviewed were very satisfied with the relevance of their learning and with the support provided by tutors. Prisoners pursued a range of programmes from driving theory practice to Open University courses. However, there were no mechanisms for linking prisoners on release to literacy and numeracy provision in the community.

7.7 The learning centres enjoyed excellent links with local Colleges which facilitated a few prisoners accessing further learning opportunities. The arrangements with Angus college were particularly good since the prisoners were not just achieving a SVQ level II award in construction skills, but also the industry standard "work card" indicating that they had been

trained to an appropriate standard. This would allow them to access employment on larger building sites following release.

7.8 The number of accredited National & Higher National Units achieved at Castle Huntly had fallen from 25 in 2001-2002 to 11 in 2003-2004 and at Noranside from 83 to 11 over the same period. This was against the trend of achievement in other local prisons. There were no available records in the learning centre to determine achievement figures for 2004-2005. Motherwell College was in the process of undertaking a learning needs analysis by engaging current prisoners in structured individual interviews.

7.9 Staff were not systematically conducting self-evaluation, which had resulted in few formal opportunities for review of learning and teaching approaches or identifying and sharing best practice. Both centres would benefit from working together as a team in this regard. Teaching staff had had too few opportunities for continuing professional development. Joint training with prison officers had been limited to control and restraint training. They had only met once under the previous contract with colleagues working in other prison settings.

Employability

7.10 At both establishments all prisoners were allocated to work parties or community placements. However, around 30 prisoners were unable to participate in any LSE activity. Higher staffing at Noranside ensured that all prisoners were active. Recent staff appointments at Castle Huntly should ensure that this situation improves.

7.11 A limited range of work party opportunities was available to prisoners, although plans were well advanced to improve this. Noranside had developed a commercial garden centre to develop the knowledge and skills of prisoners. However, no vocational qualifications were offered to prisoners at both sites, which was a major weakness. The facilities provided excellent potential for their development and the prison planned to offer all prisoners an accredited vocational course by 31 March 2006. Two SQA approval visits were scheduled over the two weeks following the inspection.

7.12 An art tutor had worked in partnership with a professional artist/filmmaker to allow prisoners to produce a film which could be shown on satellite television. An arts/exhibition space and hanging space within the restaurant area in the Garden Centre at Noranside provided significant potential for artwork produced by prisoners to be publicly displayed.

7.13 Commendable progress had been made in training staff to deliver the planned range of accredited vocational courses. Four instructors had recently completed the required national assessor's award, and new staff were shadowing existing colleagues to gain experience before offering their own programmes. However, progress towards the completion of this necessary training had slowed considerably. Managers and staff were highly committed to improving the quality and breadth of the employability service offered to prisoners.

7.14 After being successfully assessed, prisoners had the opportunity to participate in community placements. These ranged from working in local charity shops through to major local employers. Prisoners greatly benefited from these opportunities, developing a range of employability skills including dealing with the public, working as part of a team and being given real responsibility and trust, such as handling cash. Placement providers spoke very positively of prisoner involvement and viewed them as valuable temporary asset to their staff teams. However, the nature of the placement was not sufficiently well linked to a prisoner's potential future vocational employment, and targets were not set and reviewed with each prisoner and placement related to their own individual needs. Staff did regularly visit placements and had devised a contract which set out clearly the responsibilities of the prison and the placement provider.

7.15 The opening of a Garden Centre at Noranside was due to take place shortly after the inspection. It has the potential to be an exciting development. It is to operate commercially, serving the public.

7.16 The physical building was at the point of completion during the inspection and the overall appearance is attractive and modern. Prisoners have shared in the building of it. Prisoners, prison staff and contractors agreed that this has been a good experience. Prisoners have also been involved in preparing plants for sale: again this has clearly been a good experience.

7.17 It is hoped that the Garden Centre will be a focus of work and training for prisoners in a range of activities: horticulture, retail, tearoom, stock management, customer service. It may lead to qualifications in Garden Centre Management. It will also provide an outlet for articles made in at least five other prisons.

7.18 Among prison staff and management there is enthusiasm about the project: there is also enthusiasm among prisoners. The Garden Centre could become a significant part of preparation for release at Noranside.

Library

7.19 The library at Noranside was located at the end of one of the accommodation blocks and was accessible to all prisoners. It was open daily for an hour at lunchtimes and on Sundays in the evening. The library stocked around 2,000 titles that were almost all fiction and had been obtained from a charity book sale a number of years ago. Some prison inspection reports were displayed, but these were all more than four years old. A stock of around 180 videos was used by prisoners to select films for showing each evening in the wings. A passman had recently been allocated to manage book and video loans, but records were not well kept and what records did exist suggested that the library was not well used. Castle Huntly prisoners had access one afternoon each week to the mobile library service provided by Perth and Kinross Council. In effect, they received the same level of service as residents in rural villages. This is an area of **good practice**. Management should consider the potential benefits of making similar arrangements with Angus Council for prisoners at Noranside.

Conclusion

7.20 Prisoners on both sites enjoyed dedicated and enthusiastic staff involved in LSE. They enjoyed their learning activities and engaged well with staff. However, the lack of accredited vocational courses was a significant weakness in the current provision offered. The prison had clear plans to deal with most of these weaknesses but this had still to impact on the prisoners' learning activities. At the time of inspection the transition to a new contract and provider was so recent that progress was necessarily limited. However, most significant

was the lack of a fully comprehensive and individually targeted plan for each prisoner, dealing with all their needs in preparation for release, and taking into account all relevant learning opportunities.

8. CARE

Family Contact

Castle Huntly

8.1 At Castle Huntly, the visits area is housed in the former Prison Officers Club located within the boundary of the prison. Visits are offered Monday – Friday, 19.00-20.30 hours; Saturday and Sunday, 12.30 – 16.00 pm. The visits are supervised by two staff from the residential function. There is no continuity of staffing: staff are allocated daily, and at weekends they are rotated during the visits. The deployment of two staff from such a small staff team to supervise low supervision prisoners, all of whom can take their visits outwith the visit area, appears to be excessive and reduces the staff available to maintain the wider prison regime. It is not replicated at Noranside. The need for this level of staffing in Castle Huntly should be assessed.

8.2 While there are two named Family Contact Development Officers (FCDO), one of these is a First Line Manager who does not undertake visit duties. The other FCDO attends the visits on a random basis depending on staff deployment. There is an expectation that Personal Officers will act as FCDOs. Given the difficulty that Personal Officers have fulfilling other duties this is not likely to be a high priority. The identification of an FCDO, who could promote contact, as happens at Noranside, would be beneficial. The operation of the FCDO scheme at Castle Huntly should be reviewed.

8.3 Prisoners are entitled to one weekend visit per fortnight if they are not participating in the Home Leave Scheme, and one evening visit per week. Generally, prisoners score visits highly in the SPS Prisoner Survey. Visits can take place within the visits area or in a designated area within the grounds. The visits room itself is suitable. This area has recently been restricted. There is no crèche provision. While picnic tables are available, visitors are no longer allowed to bring food to share during visits (unlike at Noranside). Currently a canteen facility is run by the prison providing a range of hot and cold snacks and drinks. This is due to be discontinued and replaced by vending machines. The reduction in facilities and opportunities for those taking visits should be reviewed.

8.4 It is intended to discontinue the Monday evening visit session due to low numbers. While no statistics are kept about visit usage which would support such a decision, it seemed surprising that a reduction in the visits should be planned ahead of an expansion of prisoner numbers. No planning was seen which estimated the impact of a doubling of capacity on the current visit provision. Any changes to visit availability should take into account current use and future capacity of the prison.

8.5 Telephones are readily available during hours of unlock. Because of their location they are not available during patrol or lock-up periods, times when it is often more convenient to make contact. This has been raised before by HMIP but remains unresolved. While the SPS Prisoner Survey shows a marked increase in satisfaction with access to pay 'phones, current restrictions in the daily regime mean that telephones are now not available to significant numbers of prisoners for significant parts of the day. With plans for telephones to be available in the sections of the new accommodation and telephones being available in all sections at Noranside, all prisoners in Castle Huntly should have the same access to telephones.

Noranside

8.6 Visits are available in Noranside Tuesday to Friday. They did not take place on Mondays because of prisoners returning from Home Leave: it appeared that would cause staffing problems. Prisoners are allowed one weekend visit each month but can book as many weekday visits as they want.

8.7 In better weather conditions prisoners and their families can walk in designated outside areas. Within the visits room itself there is a crèche although this does not have a window and is a bit gloomy. There is also a toilet for disabled people.

Suicide Prevention

8.8 There had been one suicide (subject to Fatal Accident Inquiry) at Castle Huntly in the year prior to inspection. There had been one incident of self harm at Noranside. ACT was initiated on two occasions (once at each site). Should a prisoner require intensive observation he is moved as soon as possible to another prison. Staff ensure that any such prisoners are

aware they will remain Open Estate prisoners and that their case conferences will be chaired/attended by officers from the Open Estate.

8.9 No listeners were available during the inspection, due to liberations. Efforts were being made to recruit and train new listeners.

Social Work

Background

8.10 Social work in prisons is part of a comprehensive throughcare criminal justice social work service, which for many offenders commences before their arrival in prison, and for some continues after release into the community.

8.11 There are two distinct social work units in the Open Estate. The unit in Castle Huntly is staffed and managed by Perth and Kinross Council and the unit in Noranside by Angus Council. There are marked differences between the units in terms of staff morale, their approach to undertaking social work functions and their links with managers and staff.

Staffing Levels

8.12 There are two full time social workers at Castle Huntly with a half post senior social worker from HMP Perth providing management and support. There is a part time administrative support worker. The expansion plan for Castle Huntly has led to discussions between the SPS, Perth and Kinross Council and Angus Council about increasing the number of social worker posts in Castle Huntly and the provision of one full time senior social worker who would cover both units. Greater involvement with the prison's senior management team is being sought in Castle Huntly, largely because of the management team's recognition of the need to increase social work and administrative staffing levels and resources. This should relieve the great pressure on both units, ensure that all statutory and other work can be undertaken and assist with the proposed increase in capacity at Castle Huntly.

8.13 The staffing establishment at Noranside is 2.5 senior practitioner social workers and a part time administrative support worker. This has not changed for some years and does not

reflect the demand for statutory reports. The SPS (which funds social work posts) and Angus Council are in discussion about increasing the establishment to three full time social workers.

8.14 The team is managed by the Angus Council Criminal Justice Manager and supported by the Noranside senior managers on site. Staff at Noranside receive appropriate levels of supervision and training, regular appraisals and personal learning plans.

Accommodation

8.15 The social work unit in Castle Huntly is located in the main castle building although it is proposed that with the construction of the new Link Centre, the unit will move there. It is anticipated that this move will facilitate better interviewing arrangements and greater integration with and support from other services within the prison such as administrative capacity. It will also ensure much easier access for prisoners wishing to contact social work staff. However, social work staff have concerns about this move. The social work unit at Noranside is located in pleasant offices in the main building and a new interview room has just been allocated to it. Staff appreciate both this and the opportunities for positive joint working with senior managers provided by the unit's location.

Resources

8.16 The limited part-time administrative support on both sites, which is provided by the SPS, has caused significant problems for some time, because of the increases in the workload and staff changes. The situation is much more problematic at Castle Huntly and managers have acknowledged this. There is now a projected increase in administrative staff and this is essential because social work staff's capacity to assist with high risk offender risk assessment issues, arrangements for home leaves, pre-release meetings and prompt submission of parole and life sentence prisoner reports is, currently, substantially reduced.

8.17 The IT systems are also unsatisfactory, for example social work staff do not have access to their councils' intranet service. This should be addressed, in order to ensure staff are kept informed of their councils' activities, eg training courses. Both units have computers linked to the SPS's SPIN system. Both units noted that recent changes in prison systems and staffing meant that at times they were not effectively communicated with, for example when

prisoners are returned to closed systems, and that the social work staff needed to work pro-actively at maintaining good communication. Any significant event relating to prisoners should be communicated to social work staff.

Workloads and Prioritisation

8.18 The social work staff have, in the past, undertaken a wide range of functions but are now having to prioritise their workloads because of limited resources.

8.19 Following agreement with management, social workers at Castle Huntly are no longer able to participate in induction processes, either group sessions or one to one interviews, because of pressure of work. The Noranside staff interview all newly admitted prisoners, believing this to be an important part of their work, both in getting to know prisoners and for prisoners to learn about social work functions.

8.20 The evening surgery, run on one evening per week, at Castle Huntly has been temporarily stopped. Social workers at Noranside offer a same day service for interviews requested by prisoners.

8.21 Some pre-release work is undertaken, as well as liaison with some life sentence prisoners including preparation for Home Leaves and release by both units.

8.22 Both units liaise with community colleagues regarding Home Background Reports for Home Leaves. Noranside staff said they had positive relationships with colleagues and staff inside and outwith the prison, eg in City of Edinburgh and Salvation Army homes where they arrange accommodation for Home Leaves or on release.

Parole and Life Licence Work

8.23 Both units give priority to statutory work as set out in the National Standards and Objectives for Criminal Justice. However, given the recent volume of parole reports and life licence reports for Tribunals, it is necessary to focus on these two areas of work.

8.24 Social worker contacts with community based colleagues tends to be in preparation for release on parole, non parole and Life Licence, as well as supervised release orders and extended sentence prisoners. The workloads for parole and Life Licence reports have increased significantly for both units since 2001-02.

Throughcare

8.25 The social work units have not been able to implement fully national throughcare guidelines, because of the limited social worker resources. However, both the Noranside social workers and prison managers participate in the Tayside Criminal Justice Throughcare Network, which is a joint Criminal Justice Service/SPS quarterly meeting that shares information and agrees developments across Tayside.

Sex Offender Work

8.26 The Noranside social work staff work with the Schedule 1 Offenders. Social workers undertake reviews of care plans and organize Home Leaves, which are difficult to arrange because of the high level of risk.

Conclusion

8.27 There is a significant issue of under-resourcing in the social work units on both sites. This has meant that the units are focusing on parole and lifer work. It has also affected the unit's capacity as to how much social work staff can be involved in the groups and programmes held within the prison. While morale and workloads are higher at Noranside, for a number of reasons, and although plans have been made to increase the level of staffing, the under-resourcing has meant that social work units cannot work or influence as widely within the Open Estate as they have the potential to do so. The new prisoners will also have an impact here. This is now recognised by prison management team and is being addressed.

Home Leave

8.28 Undoubtedly Home Leave is a big attraction for prisoners. They are fully assessed for suitability to undertake Community Placements and Home Leaves, and if deemed suitable the prisoner is allocated to a Home Leave group arranged geographically. When the Home

Background Report (HBR), completed as part of the assessment, arrives Home Leaves can commence. Delays in receiving HBRs are a source of frustration. Prisoners who have been taking part in community placements prior to arriving at the Open Estate express frustration that they must be re-assessed for placements. However given the change in their circumstances, this re-assessment is not inappropriate.

8.29 A pre- and post-Home Leave meeting used to prepare prisoners for a first Home Leave and to discuss issues which arose has been discontinued. There was no clear reason as to why this should have stopped. A structured programme of preparation for, and review of, Home Leaves should be reintroduced.

8.30 A major concern for prisoners was that while Home Leaves are highly valued, prisoners receive only £7 to cover expenses for three days. This means that they are highly dependent on their families. Families are often living on restricted budgets themselves and are not easily able to afford this extra cost no matter how welcome the Home Leave might be. Families on benefits can claim an additional payment; however this does not lessen the feeling of dependency. Prisoners can and do save their earnings however these are not substantial. A realistic payment should be made to prisoners to meet the expenses incurred during Home Leaves.

8.31 Prisoners take Home Leave throughout the UK. While for most travel is relatively straight forward, some travel to the South of England. SPS only arranges and pays for bus or train travel - not budget airlines which can offer significant savings in time and money. If prisoners choose to use the airline option for long journeys, some might be disadvantaged as it is their families who are required to book and pay for such travel. The reason given is that the Prison does not have a credit card which is necessary for such airline bookings. All prisoners should have equal access to the most appropriate travel arrangements.

Programmes

8.32 Prisoner programmes are co-ordinated across both sites by one person. Programme facilitators are drawn from the residential and activities staff in both sites. These staff have been specially trained but their availability can be affected by pressure from other duties.

8.33 The Open Estate has recently delivered three Approved Activities:

- Self Management and Recovery Training (SMART)
- Alcohol Awareness
- Health Choices

8.34 The Open Estate had a KPI target for 2004-05 of 120 completions. It achieved 119.

8.35 Facilities for programme sessions are limited in both locations. The visit area and learning centre are sometimes used in Castle Huntly, in Noranside the Links Centre is available when necessary.

8.36 It would be easy to assume that prisoners' programme needs will have been met prior to them reaching the Open Estate. However, this may not always be the case. Although the KPI target was all but achieved last year the population will be increasing by 141. Relying on residential or activity staff being able to deliver programmes as an adjunct to their main duty carries a risk. This should be monitored.

Race Relations

8.37 Race Relations are managed separately on both sites by a First Line Manager. Each has a Race Relations Committee, although neither has met this year. There seems to be no reason why there should not be a single Race Relations Committee. However, no matter the arrangements, the Race Relations Committees should meet regularly.

8.38 There has been one complaint of a racial nature in the past year. This was withdrawn by the complainant. The paperwork was examined and found to be clearly and accurately completed.

8.39 At the time of inspection there was one prisoner from an ethnic minority group in Castle Huntly and five plus two European nationals at Noranside. Muslim prisoners at both sites are able to attend the Mosque in Dundee every Friday. Religious observance is not restricted and appropriate provision is in place. Provision is made for a practising Buddhist to have a religious adviser attend and an area for meditation is available.

8.40 There is provision for appropriate diet. At Castle Huntly individuals meet with the Catering Manager and individual provision is made. At Noranside, one Muslim prisoner cooks batches of food twice per week; these are frozen as individual meals and are available whenever the menu provision is not appropriate. Prisoners were very content with this arrangement which appears both imaginative and sensitive to need. The Race Relations Officer at Noranside indicated that if a prisoner with a dietary requirement was in a section where others using the sandwich maker provided might cause some contamination, separate sandwich makers were available to ensure that dietary requirements were respected. Efforts to treat dietary requirements with respect and sensitivity are an area of **good practice**.

Chaplaincy

8.41 Access to religious services in the Open Estate is good, although there have been some problems due to the illness of one of the Chaplaincy team. There is multi-denominational representation on both sites and Chaplains are in regular attendance to provide support to prisoners.

8.42 Prisoners can attend local churches for worship. Most prisoners at Castle Huntly attend Sunday services in Longforgan but they can request to attend a church of their own denomination in Dundee when they arrive in the Open Estate. The prison provides transport to services from Noranside.

8.43 The Chaplaincy team said they have tried to become a greater part of the whole life of the prison. They have also tried hard to present themselves to the prisoner group as a neutral “safe pair of hands” that prisoners can use as a sounding board. Chaplaincy has a slot in the induction programme for prisoners and they are regularly out and about the prison. In this way they can offer informal moral support, relationship advice and support to prisoners with addiction problems. A formal referral system also exists. The Chaplains recognise the boundaries of their work and when appropriate will refer to Cranstoun, the health centre staff or other departments.

8.44 A Chaplaincy group meets bi-monthly. Attendees are the two Church of Scotland Ministers, the two Roman Catholic Priests, a Salvation Army representative, a Prison

Fellowship representative, a manager from the prison and the SPS Chaplaincy Adviser. At these meetings the team discusses aspirations and strategy, and pass on information.

8.45 In the past Chaplains have been involved in mediating between prisoners and their families. This has been helpful in the transition of prisoners from prison to community. It reinforces the Chaplains description of their service as being one of support as much as it is of promoting faith.

8.46 A new feature of Chaplaincy work is “Tuesday at 7”. This is a social event held in Castle Huntly which members of the Chaplaincy attend with prisoners. A guest speaker is invited to speak on a topic of interest, not necessarily religious in nature. This is a good idea at an early stage of development and is an area of **good practice**.

8.47 Chaplains are also creating a programme on how to develop self-esteem and understand forgiveness. There are also plans to start an “Alpha” course in the autumn.

Visiting Committee

8.48 Each site has its own Visiting Committee: the same person acts as Clerk to both Committees. Representatives of each committee were met during the inspection.

8.49 Agreed by both were these points:

- the absence of the Governor on periods of secondment had caused problems; and that his uninterrupted presence would be welcome and necessary
- Good support is given to the Committees by the prison and the Governor
- few matters are drawn to the attention of Visiting Committees by prisoners
- drug usage in prison reflects drug usage in society, but the prison responds vigorously to drug usage

8.50 The Visiting Committee at Castle Huntly had been engaged with the local community, in particular since the announcement of the building of the new block. There were concerns in the village of Longforgan about possible difficulties for the village. The

Councillor for Longforgan is a member of the Visiting Committee and has sought to allay the fears of the community. He welcomed the energy with which the Governor has sought to do the same. Significant concern was raised at Castle Huntly about the absence of useful activity in the evenings and at weekends. It was stressed that this matter must be addressed before the new prisoners arrive in the new block.

8.51 The Visiting Committee at Noranside expressed satisfaction with the standard of accommodation and with the cleanliness of the prison.

8.52 The records of both Committees were examined: nothing unusual was found.

9. SERVICES

Estates and Facilities

9.1 At the time of inspection life at Castle Huntly was dominated by the effects of the new building project underway. The new accommodation will house up to 141 prisoners. This was having an impact on other estates work. An example of this was a broken underground pipe that was causing problems with the central heating in parts of the accommodation. It was not possible to get to the pipe to effect a repair until the contractors were off-site. The Estates Department was monitoring temperatures in the wings to make sure they did not fall below acceptable standards.

9.2 Buildings are generally well maintained in both sites. In Noranside in particular there had been a number of projects undertaken to improve facilities. These included the creation of new offices, interview rooms and the creation of secure doors to allow the prison to be zoned at nights. This “zoning” work had already been completed at Castle Huntly. The magnetic locking system used provides good security whilst not threatening safety.

Health and Safety

9.3 Health & Safety is jointly managed between the two sites and attempts are being made to ensure consistency of approach. A central file is kept of Residential Risk Assessments, although subsequent safe systems of work require to be implemented across all areas of the Open Estate. Training records were well maintained and levels of awareness were reasonable, but it is a constant struggle to free up staff for training. Most accidents reported were of a minor nature but monitoring systems should be improved. Health and Safety meetings were held and proceedings recorded.

Human Resources

9.4 The Open Estate is unique in SPS in that it does not have a human resources “professional” in charge of their HR department. The prison combined the task of managing business improvement and human resources on a trial basis in 2003 and the arrangement seems to have worked well.

9.5 The prison's own view is that all areas of HR policy management are well managed and when necessary professional advice is accessed from SPS HQ. The HR "vision" is extracted from SPS policy and converted into local action through discussion with the broader management team in partnership with the TUS representatives in both prisons. HR Managers from other establishments have audited the arrangements in the Open Estate at various times and the feedback has been positive. Discussions are now ongoing to make the arrangement permanent.

9.6 Delivering core training in the Open Estate can be difficult because of the small number of staff available at any one time and the lack of full time training staff. That said the prison is able to meet its national incident management commitment and it participates in national training events. First aid training, absence management, and equality & diversity training have all been delivered recently.

9.7 Facilities for staff training in both sites are good. Line managers take an active role in the identification of training needs and co-ordination is undertaken through the HR department. On occasion training has been accessed from Perth and this appears a good option, particularly for national training initiatives.

9.8 A significant amount of work is required for the arrival of new staff to the Open Estate in time for the opening of the new accommodation in Castle Huntly. It was noted that although the new build was only a few weeks away from being ready for use, the staff coming to Castle Huntly had not been identified and therefore their transfer and training needs had not been organised.

Catering

Castle Huntly

9.9 The standard of food provided in Castle Huntly is excellent. This was observed during inspection and confirmed by feedback from prisoners and in the most recent SPS Prisoner Survey results. In the survey 94% of those who responded said that food was very good, fairly good or okay. This is an increase of 14% from last year's result.

9.10 Prisoners dine in association in a well-appointed and pleasant dining area. Food is served from a hot plate linked directly to the kitchen. This reflects previous experience where the best arrangements for food is when the kitchen is attached to the servery and prisoners have their meals put straight onto their plate rather than through a heated trolley.

9.11 Castle Huntly does not have a pre-selection menu system. There are choices every day but it is “first come first served”. It is unavoidable that on occasion the prisoners served last will have limited choice. When this has happened the kitchen has offered sandwiches or an omelette. Prisoners did not think that not submitting their selection in advance was a major problem. Indeed, the reason given for stopping the pre selection system was that staff had great difficulty in getting the prisoners to fill in the menu forms.

9.12 Prisoners on outside placements are provided with lunch packs. Some prisoners expressed disappointment at the size and quality of the lunch pack: two sandwiches and nothing to drink. It is apparent that the quality and quantity of the lunch packs for those on placements did not measure up to the standard of the meal offered to prisoners who ate in the prison at lunch times. This should be addressed.

9.13 The menu caters for all religious and cultural requirements, although the catering manager indicated that it was rare to have a prisoner ask for any “special” diet. Complaints tend to be dealt with informally. The arrangements at Castle Huntly lend themselves to this, again because catering staff are directly involved in the serving of meals and therefore any problems can be dealt with face to face. Formal complaints are very rare. Complaint forms are readily available at the prison gate but the catering manager said it had been two years since a formal complaint had been received. The catering manager sees all new prisoners as part of the induction programme.

Noranside

9.14 The catering arrangements at Noranside are also very good. The quality of the food is very good, with a reasonable choice. Food is served from a servery directly to the dining room and the Catering Manager is usually visible and available throughout meals. Prisoners confirmed that they were happy with the food, saying that it was hot and to a good standard.

9.15 The dining area had a relaxed, almost restaurant, feel to it. Cutlery was placed on tables and water jugs filled with cold water. Each prisoner was responsible for clearing their table. The dining room itself was in need of some redecoration.

Conclusion

9.16 The catering arrangements across both sites are an area of **good practice**.

Laundry

9.17 Prisoners reported that they were content with the laundry arrangements and had no complaints. However the capacity of the laundry at Castle Huntly should be examined to ensure it can cope with the additional prisoners.

Canteen

9.18 The canteen for prisoners in Castle Huntly was, until recently, organised by prisoners themselves. This was changed as a result of unforeseen circumstances: a breach of trust resulted in Management moving responsibility to one of the prison drivers. The new arrangement is unpopular with the prisoners.

9.19 The driver has to organise and open the canteen over and above his other duties. This means that the shop is open far less often than previously. In the past prisoners could access the shop six days a week. It is now open on a Tuesday and Thursday from 16.00 hours until the queue has been exhausted, this can take until 20.00 hours.

9.20 The canteen stock is limited by the size of the room and the choice is based on demand. It is hoped that as the private contractor takes on more of the driver's duties there will be the opportunity to open the canteen more often.

9.21 The prison should have arrangements in place to facilitate prisoner access to the canteen every day.

9.22 The canteen for prisoners at Noranside is located in the Visits area. It is run by prisoners who are responsible for all aspects of its operation including stock and finance. The goods stocked reflect prisoners' preferences and any changes are agreed by the local

staff/prisoner committee. While prison management audit the operation of the canteen it still provides an excellent opportunity for prisoners to exercise responsibility.

10. GOOD PRACTICE

- 10.1 The Integrated Blood Borne Virus Service at Castle Huntly (paragraph 6.2).
- 10.2 The provision of health promotion initiatives and the two “well person” days per year at Noranside (paragraph 6.7).
- 10.3 The library arrangements at Castle Huntly (paragraph 7.19).
- 10.4 The arrangements to treat dietary requirements at Noranside (paragraph 8.40).
- 10.5 The “Tuesday at 7” social event run by the Chaplaincy Team at Castle Huntly (paragraph 8.46).
- 10.6 The catering arrangements at both sites (paragraph 9.16).

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Concerns about the readiness of the Open Estate to cope with the additional 141 prisoners at Castle Huntly should be addressed (paragraphs 2.1, 2.18, 4.18, 5.13, 5.18, 5.21, 6.5, 8.4, 8.27, 8.36, 9.1, 9.8, 9.17).

11.2 Ways should be found to allow Castle Huntly prisoners greater freedom of movement within the prison (paragraph 2.7).

11.3 The operation of the Sentence Management Scheme nationally should be reviewed and resource implications clearly identified (paragraph 5.13).

11.4 A consistent system for providing prisoners with information about the Open Estate is put in place across the SPS (paragraph 5.14).

11.5 The Links Centre in Castle Huntly should be completed as a matter of urgency (paragraph 5.18).

12. POINTS OF NOTE

12.1 The standard of accommodation in the dormitories in Castle Huntly should be improved (paragraphs 2.3 and 2.5).

12.2 Recreation facilities in Castle Huntly should be improved (paragraph 2.6).

12.3 Ways should be found to allow the mountain bikes in Castle Huntly to be used (paragraph 2.6).

12.4 Both sites should ensure that Prisoner Complaint Forms are available and accessible (paragraph 3.4).

12.5 The Addiction Strategy should be updated and an implementation or action plan developed (paragraph 4.9).

12.6 The outline paper on the integrated care pathway of addiction treatment should be developed in more detail (paragraph 4.10).

12.7 The Drug Strategy Team for both sites and the Castle Huntly Addictions Management Team should be reconvened (paragraph 4.15).

12.8 Management should ensure that residential officers fulfil their role in prisoner induction (paragraph 5.4).

12.9 The improvement in the Sentence Management arrangements at Noranside should be maintained (paragraph 5.12).

12.10 The arrangements for Sentence Management at Castle Huntly should be improved (paragraph 5.12).

12.11 The resources available to carry out work associated with life sentence prisoners should be reviewed to ensure the needs of the additional prisoner population will be met (paragraph 5.21).

- 12.12 Lifer meetings and lifer self help groups should be organised (paragraph 5.21).
- 12.13 The lack of storage space and inadequate soundproofing in the health centre in Castle Huntly should be addressed (paragraph 6.4).
- 12.14 The small arts room in the Noranside Learning Centre is not a suitable environment for learning and should be improved (paragraph 7.4).
- 12.15 Tutors in Noranside should be able to access software to support learners with additional support needs (paragraph 7.4).
- 12.16 The learning centre in Noranside should have a photocopier installed (paragraph 7.4).
- 12.17 Teaching staff at Noranside need to develop mechanisms for engaging with prisoners, particularly those with literacy and numeracy skills (paragraph 7.5).
- 12.18 There were insufficient mechanisms for teaching staff in Noranside to meet other prison staff or to promote learning opportunities to prisoners (paragraph 7.5).
- 12.19 No mechanisms were in place to prioritise provision for prisoners with literacy and numeracy needs (paragraph 7.5).
- 12.20 There were no mechanisms in place for linking prisoners on release to literacy and numeracy provision in the community (paragraph 7.6).
- 12.21 Staff in both learning centres should systematically conduct self-evaluation (paragraph 7.9).
- 12.22 More prisoners in Castle Huntly should be able to participate in Learning, Skills and Employability activity (paragraph 7.10).
- 12.23 No vocational qualifications were offered to prisoners at both sites (paragraph 7.11).

12.24 Management should consider the potential benefits of making the library arrangements at Noranside similar to those at Castle Huntly (paragraph 7.19).

12.25 The need for the level of staffing at visits in Castle Huntly should be assessed (paragraph 8.1).

12.26 The operation of the Family Contact Development Officer Scheme at Castle Huntly should be reviewed (paragraph 8.2).

12.27 The reduction in facilities and opportunities for those taking visits in Castle Huntly should be reviewed (paragraph 8.3).

12.28 Any changes to visit availability at Castle Huntly should take into account current use and future capacity of the prison (paragraph 8.4).

12.29 Prisoners in Castle Huntly should have the same access to telephones as prisoners in Noranside (paragraph 8.5).

12.30 Social work staff should have access to their councils' intranet service (paragraph 8.17).

12.31 Any significant event relating to prisoners should be communicated to social work staff (paragraph 8.17).

12.32 There is a significant issue of under-resourcing in the social work units on both sites, and the implications of this should be examined (paragraph 8.27).

12.33 A structured programme of preparation for and review of Home Leaves should be reintroduced (paragraph 8.29).

12.34 A realistic payment should be made to prisoners to meet the expenses incurred during Home Leaves (paragraph 8.30).

12.35 All prisoners should have equal access to the most appropriate travel arrangements for Home Leaves (paragraph 8.31).

12.36 The delivery of programmes by staff with other duties should be monitored (paragraph 8.36).

12.37 The Race Relations Committees should meet regularly (paragraph 8.37).

12.38 The provision for lunch on placements should be addressed (paragraph 9.12).

12.39 The dining room at Noranside should be redecorated (paragraph 9.15)

12.40 The capacity of the laundry at Castle Huntly should be examined to ensure it can cope with the additional prisoners (paragraph 9.17).

12.41 Arrangements should be put in place in Castle Huntly to facilitate prisoner access to the canteen every day (paragraph 9.21).

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

Written material and statistics received from the prison prior to Inspection

Prison's self-assessment

Governor's briefing

SPS Prisoner Survey

Prison Records

SPS background material

Discussions with prisoners

Discussions with prisoners family

Focus groups with prisoners

Interviews with prisoners

Interviews with prison staff

Focus groups with staff

Observations

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