



# **HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS**

## **Report on HM Young Offenders Institution**

### **Polmont**

**May 2004**

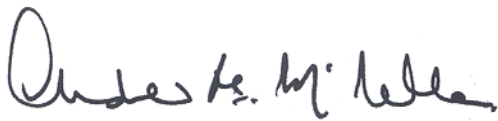


**SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE**

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 HMYOI Polmont between 15-23 March 2004.

Ten 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

May 2004

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## **1. PREAMBLE**

1.1 Polmont might appear to be an uncomplicated prison: it contains only male prisoners under 21, and in some cases up to the age of 23. In reality it is much more complicated. The prisoners it contains are both convicted and unconvicted; convicted prisoners are serving sentences ranging from a few days to life; there are sex offenders and other prisoners on protection who are not sex offenders; some sixteen year olds are very immature and some twenty-one year olds are very mature; and sometimes Polmont contains children who are under sixteen. The range of needs and problems is very great.

1.2 It is more than the mix of prisoners which makes Polmont complicated. It often seems like two prisons in one. Conditions in Argyll and Spey Halls are very bad; and conditions in Iona are very good indeed. "Slopping out" still occurs in Argyll and Spey: which means that under twenty-one prisoners on remand, who have not been convicted of an offence, have no access to toilets during the night (and often during the day when they can be locked up for considerable periods). In many prisons unconvicted prisoners have long and empty days with very little to do, and Polmont is no different. But it is less usual in Scottish prisons that unconvicted prisoners also live in the poorest conditions.

1.3 Iona Hall, on the other hand, was opened in 2003. It provides accommodation which can be described as excellent. The cells are large, bright and airy, there is a separate toilet within each cell, the communal areas are open and fresh, and, even after a year, the whole hall is really clean. In group discussion and in individual meetings, prisoners from Iona Hall consistently reflected the most positive attitudes to their experience of imprisonment ("there is help for anything here if you want it"); and prisoners from the poorest accommodation consistently reflected the most negative attitudes. While it is likely that some of the halls with the worst accommodation will hold prisoners who will be negative about their experience for reasons nothing to do with their accommodation, the effects of good accommodation on prisoners and on prison staff alike are very noticeable in Polmont; and were commented on by staff at all levels and by prisoners during the inspection. In general, relationships between staff and prisoners are good in Polmont; but they are particularly good where the conditions are good.

1.4 It would be easy to record the most negative comments: there is a great deal of despair in Polmont. But the positive comments are also real: *When I came to Polmont I thought 'I am not going anywhere for 21 months', so I decided to get the head screwed on....I have come on leaps and bounds .... It has helped me a lot.....Now I can write letters to my Ma and my brother....I want other people no matter how old they are to know there is still a chance for them too if they seek the help.... When I get out I am going to do more classes and get a qualification to be a mechanic.*

1.5 In more subtle ways Polmont can appear as two prisons in one. There are two cultures within it. It is both a place where young offenders are called “young adults”, where their “adolescence” is recognised. Some staff wear the traditional uniform while others wear informal “sweat-shirt” uniforms. It is a place where (notwithstanding the comments above about generally good relationships) in front of inspectors, staff shout and swear at young adults, and call them by their last names. It is noticeable that Polmont has a low proportion of female officers: might the culture change if that balance were redressed? In one culture Polmont is a huge secure unit for adolescents with adolescent problems and needs; in the other it is a prison which happens to contain young people. The report refers to the “Care Orderly Room” to deal with disciplinary issues around addictions: by some, both staff and prisoners, this is seen as a far-sighted initiative offering treatment instead of punishment, while by others it is seen as a soft option.

1.6 At the time of the inspection the establishment was considering changing the circumstances of Nevis Hall, which has held some of the least cooperative prisoners in Polmont. It is always a difficult decision: is it better to isolate such prisoners in a “downgrade” hall, or to seek to integrate them throughout the establishment? Changes in the regime and the prisoner mix of different halls have been frequent at Polmont. Some of these have been a result of the increase in numbers after most male young offenders in Scotland were transferred to the single site in Polmont in 2003; some have been the result of the building of Iona Hall.

1.7 Such changes can be difficult to manage; and during the inspection, representatives of the Visiting Committee expressed concern about the number and rate of changes. Much more vigorously, however, they expressed concern about the effects of financial cuts on Polmont.

1.8 For years Polmont has struggled with the problem of finding enough useful activity for every prisoner; and the rise in numbers within the last year (which is a result of transfers from other prisons and not the result of increasing numbers of young offenders), has not made that easier. The latest attempt to deal with the problem is “timetabling” - designed to make sure that prisoners have an opportunity for work for at least part of each day. This is an attempt to provide equitable sharing of resources: but if the resources are inadequate then “timetabling” will not fill up useful days, however equitable the sharing of resources. It has not solved the problem. Many young adults spend a great deal of time locked up in cells. Polmont must not allow a “lock-up” mentality to become the normal way of life.

1.9 Among those who spend a great deal of time alone in their cells are children under 16 detained in Polmont. It is not possible for Polmont to provide anything like suitable circumstances, conditions and activity for fourteen and fifteen-year-olds. The report describes the conditions in which they are imprisoned. Children are only held in prison when no other place is available to them: but that does not make it right.

1.10 Almost every source of evidence agreed about one matter. There is not enough food for young men. The Visiting Committee, all prisoners, most members of staff, the catering department and the governor all identified this concern. During the inspection the food was generally good, but the portions were noticeably small.

## 2. POPULATION AND ACCOMMODATION

### Population

2.1 Polmont now holds almost all of the male under-21 prisoner population in Scotland. Convicted young adults from Dumfries and Glenochil and under-21 remand prisoners from Barlinnie have been moved to Polmont in the last year. This means that there are now 50% more prisoners in Polmont than a year ago. In the first day of inspection 650 young adults were being held.

2.2 Some additional staff are now in place as a result of the increased population. There has been a small increase in activity places, but no improvements to existing regime facilities. These were cited by some staff as reasons to keep some young adults locked in their cells. The most significant change to Polmont is the opening of a new accommodation block. But some of the other accommodation and facilities are not good. No changes were made to KPI targets as a result of the increase in population.

### Accommodation

2.3 Polmont has nine accommodation areas. The cellular accommodation in the Health Centre is covered in the chapter on Healthcare. The others are detailed below.

#### *Argyll Hall*

2.4 Argyll hall was built in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and despite recent refurbishment including the installation of Electric Power in Cell (EPIC), conditions are not good. Young adults 'slop out' through the use of porta potties which are emptied every second day. This is a most unpleasant job undertaken by hall cleaners in an area adjacent to the hall. The area is open to the elements and the water pipes and chemicals sometimes freeze in the cold weather. There is no running water in the cells but prisoners are provided with hand wipes. **It is recommended that better arrangements for access to sanitation and hygiene are found in Argyll Hall.**



2.5 In addition to the lack of proper sanitation, conditions generally in the hall are poor. There is little natural light, walls and fixtures in communal areas are covered in graffiti, and in some areas the linoleum floors are damaged and in need of repair or replacement. The communal toilets and showers had been mopped but it was apparent that grime on the walls and in the corners had been there for some time. The showers on the ground floor were communal with no cubicles or privacy screens. The furniture in many of the cells was old and broken and the walls were covered in graffiti. There can sometimes be litter including bodily waste in the yard which young adults have thrown out of their cell windows.

### *Spey Hall*

2.6 Spey is similar in age and design to Argyll. EPIC has been installed in the cells since the last inspection. Prisoners here use chamber pots which they can empty in the hall ablutions areas three times a day. Prisoners do not have access to running water except at slop outs though they are provided with hand wipes. There are only six showers for the whole hall. The showers are in cubicles. **It is recommended that better arrangements for access to sanitation and hygiene are found in Spey Hall.**

2.7 Spey holds under 21 remand prisoners. They spend much of their time in their cells. Exercise is available every day in a yard outside the hall. Young adults can also attend recreation on alternate evenings in the hall or in a recreation room nearby. Facilities consist of pool, table tennis, a large screen television and play stations. There are five telephones in the hall, although two are in the recreation room outwith the main concourse so they are not always accessible.

2.8 There is a small group of young adults on the second floor of Spey who do not mix with others because they fear for their safety. They are known locally as “self deprivals”. Some have been accused of sex offences, others have enemies in the main population. They have exercise separately and only get to recreation once or twice a week. The establishment should make sure that these prisoners have reasonable access to a regime.

### *Nevis Hall*

2.9 Each cell in Nevis has EPIC and the hall has an electronic night sanitation system in place.

2.10 Nevis holds what are known locally as “non-conformists”. These are young adults who have been downgraded from the mainstream convicted population because of their behaviour in general or after specific incidences of violence, bullying or misbehaviour. However, no attempts are made to deal with or challenge their behaviour while in Nevis. The atmosphere in the hall is tense and oppressive, and a serious incident had taken place in the exercise yard a couple of weeks before the inspection.

2.11 In ‘A’ section, 10 prisoners are held on a very limited regime. The night sanitation is switched off and the prisoners have to ‘slop out’. They have EPIC but no television, kettle or lamp. There is little opportunity for activity outwith the hall. The staff described this section as the “assessment” section but some prisoners were working their way back into mainstream after a period in segregation. The facilities in this section were poor, and while permission would also have to be sought from SPS HQ to keep young adults in the Segregation Unit on Rule 80, no such permission is required for ‘A’ Section in Nevis. To all intents and purposes the prisoners in ‘A’ section are out of association.

2.12 There are four showers in metal cubicles, for the whole hall. There is graffiti on many of the cell walls, food is served from a cupboard in the centre of the hall and prisoners take their meals back to their cells to eat. The facilities for dishwashing are not good. Plates and cutlery are collected after use and washed in a cupboard at the end of one of the sections. This practice should stop and the facilities generally should be improved.

### *Cramond Hall*

2.13 Cramond houses protection prisoners. This includes a mixture of sex offenders and non-sex offenders; short term and long term young adults. The hall has 78 cells, with single occupancy throughout. On the day of inspection the population was 74. There are two floors with three sections on each floor. Young adults have access to night sanitation under the

same conditions as in Nevis (described above). There is EPIC in each cell and prisoners have TV's and kettles. The upper floor is considered 'enhanced'.

2.14 Prisoners collect their meals from a heated trolley and eat in their cell. Recreation facilities comprise pool, table football and play stations. Prisoners expressed their disappointment at not being allowed to associate in cell during recreation as all doors are locked. Staff said this was to prevent violent or sexual activity taking place in cells, but since they also said that Cramond is a quiet hall with very little violence or bullying, (there had been only one fight in the last year), this seems to be overly restrictive.

2.15 The exercise yard is adjacent to the building. On the day it was inspected, building work had reduced its size, and prisoners were crammed into a very confined space. On one of the days of inspection young adults were not allowed out for exercise in the open air because it was raining. They were not offered inside association in its place but kept locked in their cell. The reasons for this should be examined.

2.16 Interviewing facilities are very limited in Cramond. One area used is a converted toilet on the upper floor, and the door has to be wedged shut. This is not acceptable. Seating has been put in place which is reasonably comfortable but the large window exposing the room to the rest of the landing makes privacy impossible. These issues should be addressed.

2.17 The hall in general was clean and tidy, and the toilet and shower areas are adequate. The cells are spacious and comfortable. It was however surprising to find pornographic magazine pictures on the walls in some cells.

2.18 Relationships between staff and prisoners were very good, is reinforced by the result of the most recent SPS Prisoner Survey where 98% of prisoners in Cramond said they got on very well, quite well or okay with officers. This was the highest rating in Polmont.

### *Lomond Hall*

2.19 Lomond houses convicted short and long-term prisoners under the age of 18 years. The design is similar to Cramond. There were 71 prisoners in the hall on the day it was inspected. Staff in Lomond wear polo shirts rather than the normal staff uniform. This

creates a more relaxed and less threatening and intimidating atmosphere in the hall. Staff see themselves as mentors and positive role models for the young adults.

2.20 Recreation takes place on the landings, although there is a large room in the basement of the hall which lies empty. With a little investment and some imagination this could be a very good activity area. The stairs leading into Lomond hall are very unsightly. There are tiles missing, the skirting board is filthy and the walls are chipped and marked.

2.21 Prisoners in Lomond walk about 100 metres to a dining room in the centre of the prison at mealtimes. This is very disruptive and has the potential for mischief making on the way there and back.

### *Beechwood Hall*

2.22 Beechwood is what would formerly have been known as a “Training for Freedom Hostel”. It is located outside the perimeter fence, and can hold up to 16 low supervision prisoners in the last stages of their sentence as they prepare for release. On the day of inspection there were four prisoners living there. Prisoners are given a good deal of freedom and responsibility. They are allowed weekend home leaves and are given the opportunity to work in the community. Work placements are varied and of good quality. Polmont has formed good relationships with the local companies who take on the young adults.

2.23 Bedrooms in Beechwood are small but fit for purpose. The rest of the unit comprises of a laundry/utility room, a multi gym, a kitchen, a lounge area and a staff office. There is CCTV coverage of the lounge area. The front door is locked between 8.30pm and 7.30am. The young adults cook their own food and once a week one of them goes with an officer to a local supermarket to stock up the freezer.

2.24 There is a telephone, television and pool table in the lounge. Young adults can also play football on the grass area behind the unit.

2.25 Beechwood is a good facility that provides young adults with appropriate opportunities to prepare for release.

## *Dunedin Hall*

2.26 Dunedin is the Segregation Unit. There are 12 cells and 2 observation cells. Most cells have integral sanitation but where prisoners have damaged the fixtures they have not always been replaced. These cells are normally only used when a prisoner has made threats to damage property. There were six young adults in the unit on the day of inspection five were on Rule 80 and the other had received three days cellular confinement as a punishment in the orderly room.

2.27 The Rule 80 paperwork was of a very high standard. A case conference approach was taken in managing prisoners on Rule 80. The prisoner participated in the case conference along with appropriate staff and other specialists as appropriate.

2.28 EPIC is not installed in the cells. Prisoners are given a battery-operated radio and a flask if they are on Rule 80. Those prisoners on punishment are not given a radio and their bedding is removed from their cell between 7am and 5pm. This is a practice that stopped in adult establishments many years ago. Polmont should review the way young adults in cellular confinement are treated.

2.29 A written regime plan sets out in detail every aspect of life in Dunedin. However, the young adults in the unit had not seen it. They also said they did not get any form of induction nor were they given any information about what to expect when they arrived in Dunedin. This should be addressed.

2.30 Prisoners are only allowed to shower every second day. There is a multi-gym located in Dunedin, and prisoners are not allowed to go to the main gym. Staff do not accept requests or legal phone card orders on paper, prisoners must request verbally. Prisoners are not allowed to put photographs or posters on their cell walls. They are only allowed £2.50 from their PPC each week when others are allowed up to £5.00.

2.31 There is some recreation for Rule 80 prisoners. One at a time in the evening they are allowed out to go to a small room with a chair, a television and a play station. Unfortunately the more prisoners there are on Rule 80 the less often you will be given the opportunity. **It is**

**recommended that conditions for and treatment of prisoners in Dunedin Hall are improved.**

*Iona Hall*

2.32 Iona is a new hall opened in 2003. It has 213 cells on three floors, with two sections separated by grille gates on each floor. Some sharing takes place in larger cells making the design capacity 261. The population on the day of inspection was 237.

2.33 Iona has integral sanitation throughout, and cells are large and bright. The communal areas on each floor are also well lit and decorated. Each floor is well served with interview rooms and there is a well appointed multi-gym which prisoners can use during recreation periods.

2.34 Iona has been used as the Polmont “top end” for convicted prisoners. It also has a more enhanced regime on the top floor from where prisoners can apply for a move to Beechwood. The hall has two astro turf pitches that are used by the gym staff for outside sports activities, mainly five a side football. The hall also uses the pitches for outside exercise after lunch. There are 18 telephones in Iona, three in each section. Prisoners said that at busy times it was difficult to access a telephone.

2.35 Meals are served in each section and are hot and fresh. However, although there are tables and chairs located in each section, young adults take their food back to their cells during the week. At weekends they eat at the tables. The reasons for not allowing individuals in Iona to dine communally should be examined.

2.36 Recreation takes place in the sections. It is very noisy during recreation time as might be expected with so many young men milling around playing games and relaxing. Under the privilege scheme being run “Enhanced” prisoners are eligible for recreation every night and at weekends. “Basic” prisoners are allowed out to recreation on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and at the weekend and “Standard” prisoners are allowed out all periods except Friday evenings.

2.37 There have been some teething troubles in such a major building project. Cell walls are now being glazed to make them easier to wipe clean. However, a major concern was highlighted in that if a prisoner locked in his cell presses his intercom to speak to an officer, the emergency buzzer in the cell is not available until the intercom has been answered or reset from the central staff point in the hall. This has the potential to put prisoners' safety at risk with no way of raising the alarm. **It is recommended that arrangements for the emergency cell intercom system in Iona Hall are reviewed as a matter of urgency.**

2.38 Overall, prisoners and staff spoke very positively about Iona Hall. Conditions were excellent and staff-prisoner relationships were very good.

### **3. CUSTODY AND GOOD ORDER**

#### **Security and Safety**

3.1 There have been no escapes since the last inspection.

3.2 In 2002-03 there were 14 serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults against a target of seven. In the year 2003-04 up to the week of inspection there were nine against a target of seven. It should be noted in this context that the target did not increase in line with an increase in population of almost 50%. Efforts had been made to reduce levels of violence but they are still high. In 2002-03 there had been two serious prisoner-on-staff assaults against a target of one, and in 2003-04 there was one against a target of one (to time of inspection).

3.3 Polmont had some security anomalies and these were raised separately with the Governor.

3.4 Plans were being made to replace the CCTV system in the visit room. In line with recommendations from a recent security audit, funds should be sought to improve CCTV coverage in other areas as well.

3.5 The management structure within the Operations function means that staff tend to work in one area most of the time. This helps build expertise and experience and helps staff to be competent and confident in carrying out their duties. However, some staff about to be taken off escort duties expressed their unease that although this was only a few weeks away they had not been told what was going to happen to them.

3.6 Effective systems are in place for intelligence management and movements. There is a shift pattern which facilitates managerial cover during the busiest times. There is also a full time intelligence analyst, who is responsible for the collation, analysis and dissemination of all intelligence information. She works with the Security and Intelligence Managers and the Head of Operations.



3.7 There are structured meetings between specialisms to look at trends in the prison. Addictions, MDT, Residential and Security representatives meet regularly to discuss recent events and tactics to address issues that have arisen. The system is well established.

3.8 Staff-prisoner relationships in general were good, supported by what was observed during inspection, what prisoners, staff and the Visiting Committee report, and in the latest SPS Prisoner Survey. However, some staff show very poor attitudes towards the young adults and were observed shouting and swearing and calling them by their last names. This should stop immediately.

### **Prisoner Complaints Procedure**

3.9 Polmont has a very low number of complaints recorded compared to other establishments. Between 1/1/04 and 15/3/04 there had been 12 ICC's from a capacity of 649 prisoners. In the same period in Cornton Vale there had been 14 from a capacity of 275; in Shotts there had been 44 from a capacity of 516; and in Peterhead there had been 142 from a capacity of 306. A Residential Unit Manager has responsibility for organising and chairing ICC's and for carrying out regular checks on timescales and quality. Polmont, not surprisingly given the small numbers, meets its timescales. The quality of answers to CP's held on file was also good.

3.10 CP forms are generally available in each hall although in a few places prisoners have to ask for a form because staff said they were used as paper planes or thrown out the cell windows. The CP database is kept up to date and the Unit Manager uses this as the basis for her audits of the system.

3.11 In addition to the ICC's there had been 17 CP2 forms submitted directly to the Governor. These are for confidential complaints. Seven of the forms submitted were returned to the prisoner because it was deemed inappropriate for a CP2. Of the other 10, 1 resulted in further inquiries being undertaken by a senior manager into an allegation involving staff.

3.12 Three different reasons were given for the low use of the complaints system in Polmont. Some staff said that prisoners don't write complaints out because they speak to

staff who sort it out for them. Some managers said that young adults could not be bothered writing out complaints and have low expectations anyway. Some prisoners said that it was a waste of time writing out complaints because managers and staff ignore them or even worse they are lost or torn up by officers. Management should investigate why there are so few CP forms submitted by young adults.

### **Night Duty**

3.13 Most of the officers who cover night shift do so on a permanent basis. The one exception is the officers who cover the gate and ECR because of the expertise needed in the use of the technical equipment. Each residential area is patrolled by one officer.

3.14 Staff use an electronic “wand”, which tracks their movements during patrols. Electronic readers are located around the prison. At the end of their shift the “wand” is plugged in to a computer and the officer’s movements during the night are down loaded. The system works very effectively. Unfortunately a few of the “wands” were broken during the inspection. Replacements had been ordered but had not arrived. In Iona the patrol officer can press call points within the hall to track his movements. These are automatically recorded.

3.15 Because they were permanently on night shift, staff were confident and competent in carrying out their duties. They were able to describe in detail what they would do if any emergency occurred. Each also had detailed night duty instructions. Although some of the inclusions were from as far back as 1993 they were still relevant and contained all the necessary documentation one might need.

### **Prisoner Disciplinary System**

3.16 Inspectors observed the Orderly Room on two occasions with two different adjudicators. Proceedings were relaxed and as informal as could be hoped for in such a structured process. First names were used and the adjudicator made certain that the accused young adult knew what was happening at all times. Judgements reached were appropriate to the evidence and plea in each hearing. Where there was a clear breakdown in procedure a case was immediately dismissed by the adjudicator.

## **Life Sentence Prisoners**

3.17 There were 19 life sentence prisoners being held during inspection. A programme for a 'lifers week' had been drawn up in consultation with the young adults, and this consultation is to be commended. For the first such week the prison is examining the possibility of "a week away from the ordinary routine". A family night (buffet and visit) has also been arranged.

## **4. ADDICTIONS**

### **Levels of Drug Use**

4.1 The SPS mandatory drug testing policy requires that a random sample of 10% of the prisoner population is tested each month. In the year April 2003-March 2004, a total of 2,496 tests were carried out which is above the required sample of 10%. Within that period, random mandatory drug testing indicated an underlying negative rate of 88%. This means that the KPI target of 87% of prisoners who are randomly tested will test negative for drug use was being met.

4.2 From all tests completed, the most common failure was for cannabis which accounted for 84% of all positive tests. Methadone accounted for 12% and opiates 11%. It was reported that injecting was not a serious problem within the establishment.

### **Detoxification**

4.3 A seven day detoxification is available. Very few young adults enter the establishment already on a methadone programme (four at the time of inspection) but for those who do, an individual methadone detoxification programme will be devised in line with policy guidelines. Apart from those already taking methadone on entering the establishment methadone prescription is not available as the practice is to detoxify people from drugs. In Polmont all young adults are seen and assessed by a nurse in reception before they are escorted to the hall for their allocation. In reception, a medical history is taken which includes any information the young adult chooses to give regarding any prescribed and/or illicit drug use. There is a clear medical assessment protocol signed by the young adult.

4.4 The addiction nurse can refer the young adult to the addictions workers, Cranstoun or Phoenix staff or continue as key worker herself.

### **Mandatory Drug Testing**

4.5 The mandatory drug testing unit is a small, well organised unit, which sees itself as part of the therapeutic process. Staff have undertaken STRADA and COSCA courses. The

unit is open five days and every second weekend. The staff complement is six although only five were in post at time of inspection. The unit has met its targets for testing. Recording was accurate and clear information was available and able to be broken down on a hall-to-hall basis.

4.6 There is one cubicle in the MDT unit where young adults are held a maximum of four to five hours. They have access to a third of a pint of water every hour.

### **Programmes**

4.7 There were three addiction programmes running at time of inspection: a Drug Awareness Programme, a Sensible Drinking Group work programme and Lifeline. These programmes are run by addiction officers, programme staff and a social worker. There are waiting lists for each of them.

### **Staffing**

4.8 Staffing comprises one addictions co-ordinator, who manages two addiction officers and co-ordinates the work of Cranstoun Drug Services and a Phoenix House team. The addictions co-ordinator also co-ordinates some of the work done by the addictions nurse who is managed through the health care system. She also co-ordinates the work of the MDT unit.

### **Service Delivery**

4.9 Polmont does not have its own written addictions policy but follows the SPS addictions policy.

4.10 The delivery of service to individual young adults is based on very clear written protocols and processes. It is clear that much thought and effort has gone into developing this system and delivering it effectively. Referrals can be made by any young adult or by staff members.

4.11 Every admission is seen by a Cranstoun worker. Every new young adult receives a group presentation on what's on what is available from the addictions team. One of the

addictions team completes an assessment (CAART) for each individual with a drug problem and a care plan is established, signed by the Cranstoun worker and the young adult. Ongoing one-to-one work is provided by a Cranstoun worker or one of the addiction officers, while counselling is provided by the Phoenix House team. A monthly review takes place to up-date care plans. Young adults can also be referred to one of the addictions programmes. The process is a very positive one, clearly outlined with good record keeping and an excellent database to record numbers and trends.

4.12 However, a problem exists in that the Cranstoun and Phoenix House teams, and programmes all have waiting lists. This is in part due to increase in numbers generally, but the addition of only one Cranstoun worker to the addiction staff.

4.13 A positive innovation has been that of a “care orderly room” where if a young adult is found to have one positive test, he is offered the opportunity to have a case conference with several staff involved to look at what help might be required. This avoids the need for disciplinary action to be taken following a first failure, and is an area of **good practice**.

### **Cranstoun Drug Services**

4.14 Cranstoun staff of one team leader and six workers are involved in assessing young adults with drug problems and referring them to appropriate settings within the establishment. Cranstoun have struggled to meet targets because of the increase in the population, and also because the booking system does not always work smoothly. Also Cranstoun staff are being transferred for short periods to other prisons to meet demands there.

### **Drug Support Unit**

4.15 A major area of concern in addiction services is the drug support unit in Argyll hall. Managers, staff and young adults all agreed that this attempt at helping young adults stay drug free has been unsuccessful. It was originally envisaged that Argyll hall would hold 60 people attempting to become and remain drug free. However, the pressure on numbers, with the hall often housing over 100 young adults, some dealing in drugs, some taking drugs and not wishing to stop, some having no drug problems at all and others wishing to do something about the drug problem acted against positive therapeutic intervention. At the time of the

inspection Argyll was seen as the hall with most drugs, yet someone testing positive elsewhere in the YOI could be sent there. Young adults themselves saw this process as being “unfair” and unhelpful. Staff seemed frustrated by this system.

4.16 Management are aware of this problem and a proposal was being considered at the time of inspection to create an alternative addictions support unit.

### **Alcohol Services**

4.17 There is recognition within the establishment that alcohol misuse may be the most important problem to be tackled. Alcohol is seen as part of the addiction service and those young adults recognising alcohol problems are offered help through one-to-one support, a sensible drinking group work programme and the involvement of Alcoholics Anonymous. However, it may be that Management now needs to look more closely at the help it offers to young adults with alcohol problems.

### **Summary**

4.18 The process which individuals go through in Polmont when they are identified as having a drug problem and seeking help is a very positive one with dedicated staff and a clear process of care and treatment. However, there are several issues which need to be addressed including lengthy waiting lists for help, the lack of success of the drug support unit in Argyll Hall, and problems associated with alcohol misuse outside the YOI.

## **5. PRISONER MANAGEMENT**

### **Reception**

5.1 There are seven staff employed in the reception area which provides a staffing pattern of two staff on early shift, two on late shift and one member of staff described as: “as required”. The major events of the each weekday are the departure of prisoners to Barlinnie at 7.00 am and the intake in the afternoon. On the first day of inspection, 13 young adults were transferred to Barlinnie for onward management to Glasgow courts with, coincidentally, 13 being admitted in the afternoon. In addition to this, routine transfers to and from other courts are carried out by Polmont staff as are transfers in from other prisons.

5.2 Currently young adults transferring to Barlinnie for court will return to Barlinnie and be held overnight before a return to Polmont. This means that remand prisoners who have settled into their own room in Polmont lose that room. This contributes to the general problem of damage and vandalism, as individuals have no particular reason to maintain standards of cleanliness in rooms to which they will not necessarily return. The new escorting contract due to start in April 2004 should alleviate this situation since prisoners will not be transferred to court via Barlinnie. However, where possible, rooms for remand prisoners who are transferring to Barlinnie for court, should be retained to allow personal responsibility.

5.3 The reception area itself consists of a main corridor of 20 cubicles and a further six cubicles, in a separate area, (usually used for protection and vulnerable young adults). There are no communal holding rooms in Polmont; and while staff indicated that generally young adults would spend no more than an hour in a reception cubicle it was admitted that on occasions the period can be longer depending on the volume of admissions and the staffing situation. On arrival at the reception, the initial checking of warrants and identity happens in a very cramped vestibule area at one end of the cubicle corridor. On the day of inspection with 13 admissions and five staff, the area was cramped and, in the event of an incident, control would have been difficult. The reception is barely adequate for the current population lacking adequate storage facilities. The holding of young adults in cubicles for lengthy periods of time is not acceptable.



5.4 There is no opportunity for those held in the cubicles, either to receive food or drinks, although staff indicated that the priority was to move individuals to halls as quickly as possible. There is no guarantee however that individuals would not be held in reception over meal times and the new escorting contract will make arrivals even less predictable since young adults will return from court at different times. **It is recommended that consideration should be given to the provision of more modern and appropriate holding facilities in reception.**

5.5 There are two showers in the reception area, which were in poor condition and on the day of inspection, grubby. None of the cubicles contains information and while there is an excellent leaflet “The First 24 Hours” produced by the Links Centre - this could not be located in reception nor did it appear to be routinely distributed. There is clearly an opportunity to display information of this nature and other general information regarding routines etc. within the cubicles.

5.6 Generally, the reception worked efficiently. Young adults were given an initial interview with the ACT documentation being completed in private within an office that was also a separate nursing station: this is commented on separately within the healthcare section of this report. While young adults were undergoing the reception processes, property was removed from sealed bags and sorted out by an officer in a separate area. This includes valuable property. This is not appropriate: property should be opened in the presence of the owner and accounted for there.

5.7 Admissions are allowed to have in use any articles they request which are permitted by the establishment. However, for those new to the prison, there is no indication of what articles are allowed. The display of this information in the cubicles would help here. During inspection, reception staff were unable to locate reception material in languages other than English, and given that this had been a criticism in the last inspection this was particularly disappointing. Steps should be taken to display and have available in reception information in languages other than English.

## **Induction**

5.8 Induction for most admissions is carried out within the Links Centre. For those serving up to 30 days a one-hour generic induction is carried out. The aim is to do this within

24 hours of admission, although that is not always achieved. For all admissions sentenced to more than 30 days there is a two-week induction programme, normally starting on the Monday after admission. Certificated courses in first aid, food hygiene and health and safety are carried out. Manual handling is introduced and a number of assessments including initial education, addiction and health are completed. However, health promotion programmes were missing. As part of this induction process there is also the opportunity for one-to-one meetings with a range of service providers. Within the Links Centre are the Links Centre Manager, four Links Centre Officers and a range of partnership workers (including Apex, Literacy Support, Housing, Speech and Language Therapy and Jobcentreplus). These provide activities and interventions, which are outwith the responsibility of the programmes unit. This includes career preparation, accommodation issues, job seeking appointments and job search, benefits, life skills and literacy support. The STONA is used for all prisoners serving up to four years and is used as the means of identifying needs and for developing an individual community integration plan for each young adult.

5.9 Depending on length of sentence, three forms of assessments are carried out as outlined below.

#### *Short-Term Young Adults*

5.10 For short-term young adults, the SPS Short-Term Offender Needs Assessment/Community Integration Plan (STONA) has been piloted and is now being used at Polmont. This concentrates on seven areas of potential need:

- accommodation
- family contact
- benefits and finance
- employment
- learning and skills
- substance misuse
- additional support needs

### *Long term Young Adults*

5.11 For long-term young adults the SPS Sentence Management Scheme is used. The Links Centre carries out the initial interview looking at immediate needs and administering the initial psychometric tests. There is a close link between induction assessment and throughcare/transition, reflecting the developing model of prisoner management within SPS. Polmont refers, appropriately, to a transitional support process, which looks at admission, assessment (depending on sentence length) and thereafter referral or access to support and a range of interventions, and internal and external agencies. A sentence management action plan or community integration plan, pre-release, release into the community and support (where appropriate) in the community are provided. It is a well-structured and logical approach.

### *Remand and Vulnerable Young Adults*

5.12 Induction of remand prisoners is the responsibility of staff in Spey Hall. The remand hall does not use the STONA. It uses a locally constructed assessment instrument based loosely on elements of STONA. There is an internal record of completion, which serves as an audit that the assessment instruments have been completed. This system seems to work. Other prisoners for reasons of protection or vulnerability may be admitted to Cramond and as a result do not go to the Links Centre. A comprehensive induction document exists within Cramond but the document examined was considerably out of date. While it was indicated that each prisoner receives a one-to-one induction no record keeping exists which allows this to be audited. Given the nature of the Links Centre there seems to be no reason why prisoners in Cramond could not receive the same induction as other prisoners. **It is recommended that consideration should be given to putting in place a system which ensures that prisoners who do not go to the Links Centre have an induction and assessment which is of a comparable standard to the majority of the prisoner population.**

### **Links with Halls**

5.13 From discussion both with Links Centre staff and with hall staff, it is clear that those interventions which are carried out within the Links Centre (and within the Programme

Centre), whilst well recorded are conducted in isolation from the halls. Personal Officers within the halls appear to have little idea of what interventions young adults are undertaking; nor is there any regular contact between the Links Centre and the halls regarding the progress of individuals. Plans are in place to develop a case conferencing approach to prisoner management and this should be put in place as a matter of urgency. This reflects the observation throughout this report that a number of areas of Polmont appear to work in isolation from each other. The use of a multi-disciplinary approach, particularly involving staff from the residential areas, would go some way to breakdown what appear to be unnecessary barriers between areas.

5.14 A local database is in place for recording all of the information regarding prisoners who are undergoing assessment and interventions. In particular, the database produces lists of names at key points in order for review or pre-release action to be taken. There is a concern that with the development of PR2, (the new prisoner records system), this database will be lost and consequently the tailored elements which will not exist in PR2 will also be lost.

5.15 The piloting and introduction of STONA has been welcomed at Polmont and appears to have resulted in a logical and comprehensive approach to induction, assessment and intervention. STONA however does not include any assessment of criminogenic need as appears in the sentence management approach and it is possible that some areas of needs are not identified. A review of this element of assessment would be useful. At the time of the inspection, much work was being carried out in preparation for the introduction of the SPS CorePlus Model. There was a concern that CorePlus's concentration on sentence length as the qualification for interventions limit choices being available for individuals with needs, which cannot be met due to sentence length. It would be unfortunate if sentence length prevents individuals accessing interventions which they need.

## **Pre-Release**

5.16 For both short-term and long-term young adults there is no single pre-release programme. Instead, ongoing work is carried out via an appropriate action or integration plan and the intervention work by internal and external agencies is formally reviewed three months, four weeks and then seven days before liberation to ensure that targets set have been

met. Work within the Links Centre is audited by the Links Centre Manager. The use of the STONA itself and the development of the Community Integration Plan, not only serves as the vehicle for assessment but is in itself the method of action planning and provides a means whereby these audits are carried out. An examination of STONAs and CIPs indicated that they are completed to a generally appropriate standard.

5.17 The current process at Polmont of reviewing how far the targets in CIPs and Sentence Management Plans have been met is a sound one and is an example of **good practice**. In particular, all young adults attend the Links Centre one week before liberation for a half-day course during which they are appraised by agencies in their local areas. The Stona and CIP (or Sentence Management Plan) are finally reviewed and an appointment is made for them at their local office by Jobcentreplus. Where appropriate, appointments are made with appropriate local agencies. This is a model of **good practice**. A frustration exists that in many cases the Links Centre has no knowledge of the take-up of appointments which are made and there may be grounds for considering some process which would allow a follow up system to be piloted.

5.18 As part of the wider induction to the prison YOI Polmont has a scheme whereby members of the immediate family (parents, siblings and partners) are given the opportunity of an evening to come into the prison where Links Centre staff, along with others, (e.g. addictions workers, chaplains) provide information. They are given a limited tour of the prison including accommodation areas (during the teatime patrol period), workshops, gymnasium etc. There is then a presentation in the Links Centre about what the young adults might experience in terms of assessment work programmes etc., within Polmont. There follows a question and answer session and finally a visit with the family members and young adult. This is an excellent initiative which does much to allay the fears, uncertainties and misapprehensions of family members. Those attending are invited to fill in an evaluation sheet and these provide an extremely useful and at times moving insight into the feelings of family members regarding the imprisonment of the young adults. This is an excellent initiative, which is a model of **good practice**.

### **Sentence Management**

5.19 For young adults serving over four years the SPS sentence management process is used. All long-term young adults (in common with most convicted short-term young adults)

have a Personal Officer. The timetable scheme gives two staff mornings and afternoons, Monday to Friday time for risk needs analysis and action planning work within the Sentence Management Scheme. They are allocated to the Sentence Management Centre. There is a centralised file system and database. In conjunction with the STONA work, the assessments, which are done within the Sentence Management Scheme build up profiles of both individual needs and aggregated needs, which inform programme and other delivery within the prison. The Sentence Management Manager is also responsible for Programmes and Family Contact Development Officer Scheme. At the time of the last inspection, the report noted that there had been slippage in the scheme and that a sample of those records examined showed significant omissions in terms of completion and the number and quality of routine entries. It is good to note that between April 2003 and March 2004 the monthly completion rates of Risk Assessments ranged from 71% to 100% (an average of 93% completed within timescale), while Action Plans ranged from 56% to 100% (an average of 88% per month completed to timescales). This is a significant improvement.

5.20 The content of those sentence management records examined mostly revealed improved levels of completion, although the narrative entries were still variable. The improvement requires to be monitored and sustained. Once again, it was noted that, while the work was done centrally by trained risk and needs assessment staff, these staff were not necessarily from the area where the long-term young adults were located; nor were they necessarily the personal officers of these young adults. The advantage of the current system is the high degree of compliance with targets, the disadvantage is that sentence management is seen, particularly by hall staff, as an event which happens elsewhere with which they have little identification. Now that the system is working well consideration should be given to more systematic and consistent involvement of personal officers.

### **Suicide Risk Management**

5.21 There have been no suicides in Polmont since the last inspection. There had been two attempted suicides in the period 1/4/03 to 15/3/04. In the same period ACT paperwork was initiated on 95 occasions. In the year 2002/03 ACT was initiated on 117 occasions.

5.22 The ACT strategy is well managed in Polmont. A good tracking system is in place so that all staff in contact with young adults are aware if someone is “at risk” in their area.

Documentation is completed well and consistently goes with the prisoner when necessary. Case conferences are well attended by the relevant professionals and the discussions and decisions are relevant and well recorded.

5.23 It is apparent that significant management time and effort has gone into the maintenance of the ACT strategy. A First Line Manager is the ACT co-ordinator and a good deal of his time is taken up attending case conferences and carrying out audits of the system. There is a good structure of meetings and information reports. Monthly reports come from area representatives, the co-ordinator audits paperwork on an ad hoc basis and also formally every month and the ACT Strategy group meets quarterly to review the establishments performance. This is all very good work.

5.24 There is a good Listeners scheme in Polmont. It is well known to prisoners, 93% said they were aware of the existence of Listeners in the 2003 Prisoner Survey. ACT is a topic well known to everyone in Polmont and staff and prisoners.

5.25 Suicide Risk Management is well handled in Polmont.

### **Access to Regime**

5.26 Polmont has a timetabling system in place for prisoners to access different aspects of the regime. The system is supposed to work on the basis of prisoners attending work one half of the day and attend education, programmes, physical education, visits etc. the other half. For a variety of reasons this was not working. When speaking to staff the timetabling system was the thing that generated most criticism.

5.27 The average number of prisoners attending work at any one time during the week of inspection was 114. The average population that week was 640. In the same period the average uptake of other activities was 42 at education, 14 at programmes, 137 at physical education, 13 in the kitchen, 120 remand prisoners and 75 employed as hall cleaners and other pass jobs. This leaves 125 prisoners who were eligible to work but were not doing so. Additionally, some of the young adults attending education were remands thus increasing the number not participating in any purposeful activity.

5.28 Work parties were closed because of staff shortages or redeployment. It was also apparent that there were not enough work places in Polmont for the number of prisoners it now holds. There were some convicted young adults who never went to work, education and programmes. **It is recommended that young adults are offered better access to regime opportunities and should not spend as much time in their cells.**

### **Staff Training**

5.29 The retention of IIP accreditation is a significant achievement for Polmont and is a good indication of how well staff development is managed. A comprehensive and relevant training strategy is in place and an annual plan flows from this. The annual plan contains all core competence elements for the various staff groups and the resources needed to deliver these. It also contains a comprehensive list of training planned or already undertaken to keep staff in Polmont up to date with other kinds of training. This list includes innovative work like “Youth at Risk” training, “working with abused children as adults”, “Drugscope work” and “Race, Equality and the Law”.

5.30 Core competencies in ACT, Equal Opportunities, C & R and SDBA are all at acceptable levels. Management may wish to review the need to have a target of all operational staff competent in the use of SDBA. Reducing this to a more appropriate level may provide the opportunity to do other training.

5.31 Polmont is also looking at how it can adopt the “Youth Justice Standards” from England & Wales to underpin staff recruitment, training and development. These standards recognise the differences that exist in working with young adult prisoners. This project is being undertaken locally, led by the staff training manager and the conclusions could lead to a significant change in methods and style in Polmont.

5.32 In the past training has taken place on “The Nature of Adolescence”. This has stopped but Polmont needs to provide training for staff specific to the needs of working with their unique population.



## **6. HEALTHCARE**

### **Background**

6.1 During recent inspections of Polmont a number of healthcare issues have been highlighted including:

- enhancing the delivery of care for prisoners with the addition of an RMN;
- the need to undertake an audit of Scottish Prison Service (SPS) Health Care Standards;
- improving the perceived bad service provided by doctors;
- addressing a perceived difficulty in accessing dental services; and
- improving the quality of healthcare needs generally.

6.2 A review of actions taken in response to these issues was undertaken as part of the current inspection and the findings are described below.

6.3 A copy of the 2003 SPS Prisoners Survey, provided supporting evidence on how prisoners viewed the quality of healthcare in Polmont. The survey results provided a focus for discussion with young people during the visit. Overall, the results of the survey indicated a general improvement in young adults' perception of healthcare since the 2002 Survey.

### **Healthcare**

6.4 A Healthcare Management Group, established in May 1997 is responsible for the provision of healthcare in Polmont. The Management Group is chaired by the Governor and membership includes contracted Medical Officers, the prison's Healthcare Manager, and nursing staff. The group has a number of corporate governance functions, including a responsibility to ensure that Clinical Governance is managed effectively, and for ensuring that the 17 recommendations from the SPS Nursing Services Review undertaken in 2003 are implemented and monitored. Provision of health care was well managed.

### **Health Centre**

6.5 The Health Centre is situated above the reception area, relatively close to the young adult accommodation and workshop areas. Access to the Health Centre can also be gained from the Management Unit offices situated within the adjacent floor.

6.6 The Health Centre was the first in a UK prison to achieve the Charter Mark Award and the Award offers an opportunity for Polmont to become a 'beacon' to promote quality of care to other prisoners and prisons.

6.7 The cleanliness of the Health Centre was of a high standard. A small team of young adults clean the centre seven days a week, and this has resulted in a rigorous cleaning schedule. It was obvious that the cleaning team took great pride in the appearance of the Centre.

### **Accommodation and Facilities**

6.8 The accommodation and facilities in the Health Centre have been well planned to enable and support the care and treatment of young adults. The central corridor is divided into '*inpatient*' area and '*outpatient*' facilities.

6.9 A nursing station is situated in the left wing of the centre used by the Mental Health Team. This office has an observation bay looking into a large sitting area for the use of young adults. Within this wing there is a large room in the process of being converted into a medical records storage area. Storage space has been at a premium in the Centre in the past, and the situation is about to worsen due to the imminent transfer of medical records from other prisons to Polmont, which is scheduled take place in April 2004.

6.10 Inpatient facilities include two rooms (with hospital beds) for physically ill young adults, and three small safety cells for those at risk of self-harm. There is a day room, a large kitchen and a toilet area with shower.

6.11 The outpatient facility includes a Dental Suite, the Drug Addiction Team office, and a larger general office. Further office accommodation is shared by Medical Officers. There is an open plan office for the addiction team and the 'Encouraging Quitting in Prisoners' (EQuiP) – a smoking cessation group.

6.12 There is a well equipped treatment room which was well stocked and systematically organised in readiness for carrying out medical and nursing procedures. Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation and defibrillation equipment is available in the nearby pharmacy unit.

6.13 The waiting area is centrally located in the corridor to allow maximum access to treatment rooms. The waiting room walls have been used to display a selection of information posters providing information on the provision of healthcare. A number of these posters have been designed by the young adults.

6.14 A room has been adapted to provide an interview room. This room allows privacy without telephone interruptions, and is used for focused workgroups and discussions.

6.15 Further staff accommodation consists of a large room used by the Health Centre Manager. A staff changing room, and mixed sex toilet facilities are close by.

### **Continuity of Healthcare**

6.16 In addition to the Health Centre, Spey Hall and Iona Hall have a small interview room situated on the ground floor, which can be used by nursing staff. The general standard of decoration and wear and tear in these rooms is poor and furnishing is basic.

6.17 The main reception interview room is also used by nursing staff for all reception assessments, and a triage system exists. The interview room used to assess young adults is very small and the general condition poor. There is no window in the room resulting in little ventilation, and at the time of visit the temperature in the room was very uncomfortable. A simple shower rail and curtain is contained in one corner of the room, for the purpose of obtaining a urine specimen, if required. Although the curtain provided basic privacy, it is not the most appropriate place to obtain urine specimens. This should be addressed.

6.18 A boxed computer package was placed on the floor of the admission room to enable electronic admission assessment details to be obtained, however it was difficult to imagine where this hardware could be located in such a restricted space.

### **Healthcare Assessment**

6.19 Healthcare assessment initially takes place in the main reception interview room. Nurse Practitioners assess all young adults at the time of admission: however this does not

include an assessment of learning difficulties. Integrated healthcare records are commenced at the initial assessment stage.

6.20 Core care plans are in use as part of the nurse assessment, as well as condition-specific care plans known as 'health markers'. At one stage the establishment used over 180 health markers, although this has now been streamlined by developing a small number of health indicator plans to ensure that priority is given to the most vulnerable people.

6.21 A Reception Risk Assessment (RRA) form is completed during the admission procedure. The RRA form ensures that detailed nurse risk assessment is recorded. If someone is deemed to be at risk, they are immediately managed by the Suicide Risk Management Strategy process which consists of a process of assessment, care management, and teamwork (ACT). This is supported by an impressive system of standards, audit and communication. Medical Officers, Psychiatrists and all appropriate staff are informed of the course of action.

### **Medical Arrangements**

6.22 Medical services are contracted to Medacs, who in turn have a contractual arrangement with a practice in nearby Grangemouth. The practice provides medical cover for six sessions per week. This equates to a morning surgery being provided between Monday and Thursday, and a morning and afternoon surgery available on a Friday. The additional surgery held on a Friday is a relatively new arrangement, although the contract with GPs from Grangemouth has been long standing. Weekend medical cover is contracted to Medacs.

6.23 Medical records are comprehensive and integrated with the nursing notes and other healthcare service providers. The transfer of medical notes from other prisons often presents a problem to healthcare staff. This is particularly the case when young adults are transferred from Barlinnie Prison. This was demonstrated during the visit when vital risk assessment information was missing in 4 out of 12 new admissions in one day. **It is recommended that SPS should introduce, as a matter of urgency, a quality assurance process to ensure that all healthcare documentation is transferred with prisoners.**

6.24 All receptions are seen by the Medical Officer within one working day. Medical assessments are carried out and discussed with the nursing staff. Multidisciplinary meetings are held as and when necessary. Young adults can also self-refer to a GP by completing a self-referral request form, and when activated this system appears to be working satisfactorily. However, young adults interviewed during the visit said that they were being given Aspirin and/or Paracetamol when they complained of pain without being referred to a nurse or GP. Self-referral forms can also be used to order repeat prescriptions

6.25 The doctor expressed frustration at the number of 'did not attend' prisoners who are often out of halls on activity programmes or work schedules, during the time they are required to attend medical appointments. These missed appointments are creating longer waiting times unnecessarily, and this ineffective practice could be prevented if supported by an agreed system. **It is recommended that a system should be introduced which ensures all young adults attend healthcare appointments as arranged.**

6.26 All young adults are offered a Hepatitis B vaccination when admitted, and the uptake of this is very good.

6.27 It was encouraging to see doctors supporting the practice of student nurses gaining experience in Polmont as part of their primary care placement. This involved a student nurse 'shadowing' a trained nurse for one day.

### **Nursing Arrangements**

6.28 Current staffing comprises 10 RGN, 6 RMN, and 1 RNMH with 2 vacancies (1 WTE RGN, 0.5 RMN and 0.5 addictions nurse). Nursing staff appeared well motivated and enthusiastic for the work they provide. There is also a high level of training initiatives ongoing for nursing staff, many of whom are undertaking degree courses. However, they feel undervalued. For example, staff expressed disappointment that the decision to withdraw the night nursing service was taken with little or no consultation. At the same time, a decision was taken to transfer two members of the nursing staff to another prison, (although this decision was subsequently reversed).

6.29 Therapeutic focus group sessions were held in the Health Centre. These included social inclusion groups, developing social skills group, sexual health and anger management programmes: all of which benefit young adults who require a high level of support to change their lifestyle practices. Demonstration of this is the establishment of a smoking cessation group – ‘Encouraging Quitting in Prisoners’ (EQuIP). The therapeutic focus groups in the Health Centre are an area of **good practice**.

6.30 Young adult therapy sessions have been disrupted by the time taken to escort prisoners to and from the halls to the Health Centre. This involves prison officers escorting individuals a number of times in one week. These arrangements should be reviewed.

6.31 Also it is difficult to understand the need for inpatient services overnight if there is to be no nursing staff available during these hours. It is therefore suggested that a review of the use of these rooms be undertaken, prior to the withdrawal of night nursing cover.

6.32 In response to the recommendation contained within the SPS Nursing Services Review 2003, Polmont intends to work jointly with NHS Lothian and HMP Edinburgh to evaluate healthcare needs assessment. Evaluation will commence in May 2004.

### **Mental Health Team**

6.33 The Centre benefits from a designated Mental Health Team (MHT). Doctors expressed a view that this service has been extremely useful. The MHT sees people immediately if required and in a maximum of three days following non urgent referrals. The team has strong links with community staff and operate a key worker system.

6.34 The MHT has developed core documentation which is to be commended. The difficulty of identifying young adults participating in the Care Programme Approach (CPA) was highlighted. The difficulty of ensuring continuity is compromised as people are often admitted to the prison without the knowledge of their CPA co-ordinator. This issue is part of a wider healthcare concern and the SPS should consider ways of identifying this vulnerable group of young adults. The dedicated Mental Health Team is an example of **good practice**.

## **Psychiatry**

6.35 The MHT is supported by three psychiatrists who hold clinics on a rota system Monday, Thursday and Friday. The working relationship with nursing staff is well respected and it is considered that a good service is provided. Medical records transferring from one prison to another with vital information missing, (i.e. medical risk assessments), was highlighted once more.

## **Pharmacy**

6.36 Pharmacy supplies are provided by Moss Pharmacy at a central location in Livingston. The service is held in high regard by healthcare staff who praised the same-day delivery of orders. Audit of this service identified delivery is no longer than four hours on most occasions.

## **Chiropody**

6.37 Chiropody services are provided on a one session per month basis. Young adults' views on accessing this service vary as some suggest they never have the need to use it, others have used it as and when required waiting only a short time, and others felt that they waited so long their condition improved by itself.

## **Optician**

6.38 Optician services are provided on a one-session-per-month basis. There is no waiting list for this service.

## **Dental Services**

6.39 There is a well equipped dental surgery. Dental staff were involved in designing the room. However, an issue arose with secure storage of dental instruments, where cupboards and drawers holding sharp instruments have no locks. This creates a potential risk issue for prisoners and also staff, and a more secure method of storing instruments requires to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

6.40 All new referrals are seen within two weeks. The waiting time for non urgent cases is three months, although all acute pain is dealt with immediately. Young adults expressed concern about the adequacy of the service provided by dental staff.

6.41 Some young adults complained that the dentist would take teeth out but did not want to do preventative work. The dental staff noted that they attempt to prioritise dental care and this might mean that extractions need to be done before preventative work can take place.

6.42 This situation requires to be made clear as part of the induction programme and/or in information leaflets regarding the options available. The dental service also suffer from 'non attenders' for the same reason as missed appointments with GPs', when individuals miss appointments because of work or activity programmes.

### **Physiotherapy**

6.43 There is no on-site provision for physiotherapy. Young adults are referred to physiotherapy at the BP Plant in Grangemouth. A number of minor injuries were reported, mainly occurring while playing football. Healthcare staff instigate triage as a first line of management.



## **7. LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Learning, Skills and Employability**

7.1 Young adults had access to a range of learning opportunities offered by the Learning Centre, vocational training work parties, youth work services, the Links Centre and external providers. However, waiting lists existed for education and vocational training, and the number of opportunities, particularly in vocational training, was insufficient. In addition, all providers of opportunities were affected by the large turnover in the prisoner population.

### **Learning Centre**

7.2 Educational services were provided under contract by Motherwell College. The Learning Centre was managed by a Senior Learning Centre manager, who also had a monitoring role with the other prisons where education was provided by Motherwell College. Staffing also included an Assistant Learning Centre manager, the equivalent of six full-time lecturing staff and a half-time administrator. Current staff had a good range of experience in working with prisoners and were able to offer at least 24 different subject areas. The administrator was providing much needed support to the work of the learning centre.

7.3 Prisoners had access to educational programmes five days per week, including three evenings. A high proportion of prisoners accessed education, but a considerable waiting list existed. The learning centre was on track to deliver its contractual learning hours. The prison had introduced the SPS's new policy on prisoner's pay awards.

7.4 The learning centre was situated in a self-contained block on two floors. Accommodation comprised six classrooms, including a kitchen, an arts and crafts room and one room equipped with computers. In addition, education used a multi-purpose room in Spey Hall and facilities in the Links Centre. Generally, furnishings and fittings used for education were suitable, but chairs in two rooms required to be replaced. Hardware within the computer room was due to be upgraded by Motherwell College, but there were no computer packages to encourage core skill development. The staff room, which was also used as the administrators base and for access to SPS computer systems, was cramped. Staff made good use of the accommodation available, with displays of students work. Nearly

300 young adults participated in education each month, but considering the waiting list, accommodation used for educational programmes was insufficient.

7.5 All young adults were introduced to the range of learning opportunities being offered through the learning centre through the prison's induction processes. Commendably, all new prisoners completed the Basic Skills Assessment (BSA). Learning centre staff used this information to prioritise involvement in education and to seek out young adults who would most benefit, even if they had not volunteered. Individualised learning plans (ILP) were compiled on a one-to-one basis, and provided brief notes of suggested studies young adults might undertake and some indication of their long-term goals. Staff did not use the document to review progress with individual young adults, but had created a database to record the BSA results, attendance and achievements. Staff should consider how to implement a system of reflection and review of ILPs, particularly for longer-term prisoners. This should be done in light of the prison's impending adoption of combined learning, skills and employability plans (LSEP).

7.6 The centre offered a good range of courses, many of which led to national qualifications. The curriculum had an appropriate focus on developing core skills, and some progress had been made in co-ordinating this with other providers. The learning centre should increase the focus on core skills within all classes. Most young adults were undertaking study at access or intermediate levels, but a few were working towards higher qualifications. Young adults undertook individualised programmes within a group setting, although one-to-one and open learning were actively supported. The atmosphere in most classes encouraged learning. Staff generally planned learning and teaching well. Young adults were positive about their learning experiences. Staff used a variety of suitable approaches which were generally well matched to participants' needs. They gave very good support to prisoners to promote progress and to help build self-esteem. Some non-accredited classes would benefit from a clearer focus on achievement.

7.7 Staff routinely discussed their work and were committed to improving the quality of courses. Motherwell College undertook regular audit activity, and the learning centre fully complied with College processes related to assessment. As yet, there was no systematic evaluation of quality as part of planning for improvement.

## **Employability**

7.8 Vocational training (VT) opportunities were made available within training areas/workshops. VT courses were available in bricklaying, painting and decorating, hairdressing and industrial cleaning. A work party in ICT also existed, but staff reported insufficient resources to offer meaningful training. There was no established link between the VT and ICT work parties and the learning centre. Between eight and ten prisoners could attend each VT opportunity, with a different shift in the morning and afternoon. There was a waiting list for VT courses demonstrating a considerable capacity to expand this provision. Staff had embraced quickly the recent SPS *Learning, Skills and Employability Policy* and were assessing steps that needed to be taken to meet its requirements. They were trying to ensure that VT opportunities were appropriate to gearing prisoners to the labour market conditions they would encounter on release. Very good contact had been made with JobCentrePlus, and a local private training provider to influence what courses were offered. This had resulted in the development of a car valetting course, combining the expertise of VT, the learning centre, Apex Scotland and the SPS.

7.9 Work areas were busy and productive. Relationships between staff and prisoners in all the courses were relaxed and purposeful. Staff offered individualised support to prisoners as appropriate. Some workshops offered realistic working and learning environments, particularly in painting and decorating and joinery. Prisoners were working towards a range of industry recognised qualifications appropriate to their development. Details of targets for their learning were contained in individual learning plans. Generally, prisoners were happy with their learning experiences, although those in the ICT work party were concerned about the lack of qualifications.

7.10 Accommodation used by VT was dedicated and spacious. Painting and decorating had simulated rooms for practice purposes. A majority of rooms were very hot, to the extent of being oppressive. Resources to support learning were generally good. The IT suite comprised modern computers and operating software, but there was no suitable educational software. The joinery workshop had a good range of large machinery.

7.11 Due to staffing being diverted to support escort duties, all vocational programmes were cancelled for one day of the visit.

## **Outlet Youth Centre**

7.12 Following a pilot programme of youth work interventions in the halls, a dedicated youth centre provision has been operating in Polmont since February 2003. This provision is managed, on contract to the SPS, by YouthLink Scotland, the development agency for youth work in Scotland. YouthLink Scotland employs two youth workers and brings in high quality specialists to deliver specific programmes. The youth workers are professionally qualified, experienced and skilled. They work in partnership with other agencies such as Fairbridge Scotland to deliver some programmes. Additional staffing is provided in-house by residential officers from Lomond. These officers are working towards an NVQ 3 Certificate in Informal Learning and Community Education by distance learning through the YMCA College in London.

7.13 The youth centre is located close to the Links Centre. It comprises a centrally located office overlooking a reception area with pool table, a small interview room and two large group rooms, one of which has access to a secure outside area where young adults are able to smoke. A very small kitchen is sufficient to enable young adults to make tea and coffee. One of the large group rooms has a fish tank and caged pets. In addition to the pool table, the centre has a table tennis table and popular computer games facilities. Centre staff had consulted young adults on how to brighten up the area and had made arrangements to acquire posters promoting youth-related arts events. In the adjacent Library, young adults could also access musical instruments, a mixing deck and books, some of which were suitable for young adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties. Over the second half of 2003, staff recorded between 400 and 650 attendances by young adults each month.

7.14 Young adults can access the youth centre on four and a half days each week. A visit to the centre and a short briefing from a youth worker is included in all induction programmes. Three sessions each week are 'drop-in' sessions accommodating 20 young adults in each group and whose purpose is principally associational and recreational. Young adults enjoyed the comparatively relaxed atmosphere in the centre and the more informal relationships with youth workers and officers. Staff at the centre also provide an impressive and significant range of personal and social education programmes for groups of usually 12 young adults at any time. Over a planning year, these comprise:

- A 10 month project to develop learning materials on bigotry and sectarianism funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Lloyds TSB;
- Six, four week courses each year on sexual health awareness;
- Two, six week courses each year, in partnership with APEX, on peer tutoring that enabled participants to provide individual support to young adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties;
- Six, six week courses each year, delivered with Fairbridge Scotland, on ‘independent living skills’;
- Eight, ten week courses each year in arts and cultural subjects;
- Three, eight week courses each year in yoga; and
- An innovative transitional support project linking young adults on release to key workers in the community.

7.15 Youth workers had consulted young adults prior to opening the Outlet Youth Centre to gather their views on the design of the space, facilities to be offered, staffing and programming. The aims of their approach had been to assist young adults to assess their own needs and develop with them programmes that developed their personal and life skills. They sought to empower young adults to take greater control of their lives in Polmont and on their return to the community. The youth workers had been very well supported by prison managers in taking forward this innovative approach. Residential officers valued the more relaxed atmosphere in their work at the centre. One young adult appreciated the ‘respect and trust’ he had in his relationships with the youth workers and another the ‘much less them and us’ relationship with the residential officers.

7.16 The SPS had commissioned an external evaluation of the pilot youth work programme which reported in 2001. This report commented very favourably on the extent to which the project had enhanced the social and personal development of those young adults engaged at that time. Now, most of the programmes offered within the youth centre are evaluated and reports record important anecdotal evidence of young adults’ development and achievements. Young adults keep notes from individual programmes they attend, but not a learning log. Since 2001, new materials have been developed in Scotland to enable young people to more systematically assess their social and emotional development through youth work. The youth workers should use a more systematic assessment tool such as this to evaluate more fully the

impact of their work. Overall, the work of the Youth Outlet Centre is an example of **good practice**.

## **Library**

7.17 The library had been moved just prior to the inspection visit to a former dining area adjacent to the Youth Centre. The library had not been well used by young adults in its former location. The new location was spacious but work remained to be done to convert it from its former use. Young adults had previously painted attractive murals of rock and pop legends on two walls. The library contained guitars, a drum kit, keyboards and a mixing deck used as part of the youth centre arts programmes. The space, overall, offered very good potential for further development.

7.18 Youth workers had consulted young adults in replenishing some of the stock of books. They had helpfully introduced appropriate materials to support young adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties. The library stocked around 2,500 titles. However, most of these were of little interest to the young adults. There were no CDs and very few audio tapes in the collection. There were no computers in the library. Books were not catalogued and the prison had yet to establish a system for managing loans in the new location. Only young adults engaged with the Youth Centre had informal access to books at the time of the visit. Management need to take forward their plans to make more effective use of this resource.

## **Summary**

7.19 Young adults in Polmont had access to a wide range of learning opportunities relevant to their futures. The youth work provision was particularly innovative, and was an important intervention for the client group within Polmont. However, a major challenge is how to coordinate the range of opportunities to remove duplication and create a coherent package of interventions based on the particular needs of each young adult. The prison was about to introduce Activities Allocations Boards as a means of creating bespoke solutions for individual prisoners. It is important that these involve the full range of learning opportunities available, including youth work services. It is also important that providers work co-operatively, rather than competitively, in the best interests of the young adults in Polmont. A good example of this was the development of a car valetting vocational training course,

involving the learning centre, vocational training, Apex Scotland and the Links Centre. This approach needs to be developed further in areas such as computing.

## 8. CARE

### Family Contact

8.1 Arrangements for maintaining and developing family contact are good. There are four Family Contact Officers (FCDOs) in post and at least one is on duty during visit sessions. They occupy an office which is easily accessed from both the waiting and visits rooms. A referral form system and family contact database are in place.

8.2 A number of good initiatives are in place to ensure contact is maintained. Visiting arrangements are covered in the general information pack for visitors, young adults and their families. A Newsletter “The Inside Story” is readily available in the visits waiting room. A Family Awareness Induction Evening takes place on a fortnightly basis. This involves an invitation to families to attend a two hour awareness session aimed at helping families adopt a supportive and active role in the care of the young adults in custody. Further details are provided at paragraph 5.18.

8.3 A further proposal (yet to take place) is “Family Group Conferencing”. The proposal is designed along the lines of a mediation session where the concerns of parents or close relatives can be addressed. The idea is to sit the young adult, his parents and any professionals who have an interest around the table to work out any issues causing concern. It is hoped that the first such Conference can start soon.

8.4 The waiting room was clean and pleasant and waiting times were not excessive. Notice boards were placed on the walls by theme, so there were individual boards dedicated to providing information on the health centre, programmes, outside agencies, race relations, visits, travel arrangements and so on. This is **good practice**.

8.5 The visits room is bright and spacious. The visits themselves were carried out in a relaxed and pleasant environment with staff available to answer any questions if required, but maintaining a discrete and non-obtrusive distance. There was a good canteen available and adequate toys for children.



8.6 Young adults received their visit entitlement and staff were flexible in their approach to ensure that this entitlement was met or exceeded.

8.7 The Inspectorate spoke with a number of visitors who expressed general satisfaction with the arrangements and processes. Visitors found staff pleasant and helpful and felt the visits room offered good quality visits. However, some problems were encountered with travel arrangements. Some visitors travelling by car were unable to find a parking space close to the establishment and had to walk a considerable distance. This is not an ideal situation for anyone and is particularly difficult for those visitors with a disability. A new car park is being built and should address this. Similarly, the YOI is just under one mile from the train station. This is a long walk particularly in bad weather and consideration might be given to providing a subsidised shuttle bus.

### **Physical Education**

8.8 There are eight PE staff employed seven days a week and in addition, there is a PE programme in the evenings (Monday to Friday). Four PEIs are available during the day, two in the evening and two at weekend. Additionally, two members of staff from Iona assist Monday to Friday during the day. Courses connect with education, the Links Centre and (for those in Beechwood) external work placements.

8.9 There are eight PE sessions of between 1 hr 15 mins and 1 hr 30 mins per day. Each accommodation area has access to the gymnasium on a daily basis, and each floor in Iona hall has its own mini-fitness room.

8.10 There are six one hour sessions in the swimming pool per day available to young adults. In addition to the PE and pool programmes, ten programmes run by PE staff are also available. These include certificated courses in community sports and a pool lifeguard. The CSLA course incorporates the BAWLA leader's award and a First Aid Certificate. It is encouraging to note that both of these courses have had success in accessing employment on release for some of the young adults who have undertaken them. Polmont also has a relationship with a local sports centre, which provides work placements.

8.11 The target for the PE Department is five hours per week per person, although many young adults exceed this. It is estimated that 45% of the prisoner population attend the PE Department.

8.12 The PE Department impresses as generally purposeful and, from the comments of those young adults attending, was clearly popular. The PE Department is well organised and there appears to be a genuine attempt to tailor provision to the needs of the young adults.

### **Psychology**

8.13 At the time of inspection the Psychology Unit comprised one full-time Team Leader, one full-time and one part-time Psychologist. The Senior Psychologist's position was vacant although a part-time senior was available one day per week. A further full-time position was also vacant.

8.14 These staffing difficulties have led to some realignment of work to ensure that the main requirements were being met including:

- Facilitating Programmes.
- Carrying out Risk Assessments and supporting the Risk Management Process.
- Supporting the Sentence Management Process.
- Addressing Mental Health referrals (Senior Psychologist).

8.15 The health centre reported a lack of psychology services. There is access to a psychologist but in the main this is administering programmes such as anxiety reduction and anger management, and although these sessions are well attended, they do not cater for the needs of those offenders who require one-to-one therapy. Nursing staff are reluctant to take on this aspect of treatment as they do not feel appropriately qualified.

8.16 The Unit is also keen to undertake and develop research into risk assessment tools and develop interventions specific to the population. The staff shortages have reduced the opportunity to do this. There was also an issue of trying to balance requests for local work with the core elements required by SPS.

8.17 Assessments are carried out in the halls but there is not always sufficient or appropriate interviewing space available. This problem is not unique to the Psychology Unit. In Cramond Hall, facilities for interviewing were particularly poor. One room is a converted toilet: there is no alarm and the door handle is missing. There also appeared to be problems in ensuring that young adults were available for interview at arranged times. This should be addressed.

8.18 Overall, the Unit was coping well with the staff shortages. The turnover of programmes and progress with Sentence Management were very good.

### **Social Work**

8.19 The Social Work Unit comprises one team manager, six full-time social workers (with one vacancy at time of inspection), one part-time social worker, with one full-time and one part-time administrative support. The team are employed by Falkirk Social Work Department and are managed within the Prison through the Employability Manager.

8.20 The team is located in a unit within the prison. One large office is divided to form a separate manager's office, and administration office. Another large office provides accommodation for the social workers. Although there is an interview room divided off from this large room, young adults are not allowed to be interviewed in this building so interviews take place in the halls. Another small room houses the remainder of the social workers. The team has three computers linked to the SPIN system.

8.21 There has been a high turnover of staff in the last year and the team has not been up to complement as a result of departures and long term sickness.

8.22 At present, most of the work is statutory with prisoners on licence, sex offenders and Schedule 1 Offenders. The unit comes close to meeting statutory requirements and these would be achieved with the full complement of staff. Because of the focus on statutory work, ongoing work with other young adults is sometimes curtailed. The social work team takes part in the induction process with each remand prisoner been seen as part of a group by a member of the Unit. The social work team also offers a duty service. The team also

contributes to the STOP programme and the drugs awareness programme within the institution.

8.23 When children under the age of 16 are held in the establishment, they are usually seen by a social worker each weekday.

8.24 The social work team has good links within the establishment and is a member of groups such as the ACT group, the Drug Strategy Group, the Sex Offender Forum, the STOP Management Group, the Sentence Management Group, the Activities Group, and Rule 18 Meetings. Being Falkirk Council employees, they also attend meetings arranged by the Council, for instance, Risk Policy and Criminal Justice Management Group.

8.25 Links with colleagues in community settings are important and there is a great deal of liaison with agencies in the community. This work will be enhanced when the new throughcare arrangements are introduced.

8.26 One major area of concern is interviewing facilities. Rooms are not always available and the booking system does not always work effectively. A room can be booked through the hall and the young adults' time can be booked through the booking system but on arrival at the hall, the social worker finds that the young adult is not available. As elsewhere in the establishment this needs to be addressed.

## **Programmes**

8.27 The Programmes Unit is staffed by five full time officers and a Line Manager who also had responsibility for Sentence Management and Family Contact. A range of programmes is provided:

	<b>Target Completions</b>	<b>Completions to time of inspection</b>
<b>Preferred Programmes</b>		
Cognitive Skills	36	27
Anger Management	36	33
Adapted STOP	6	6
Lifeline	12	20
	90	86

**Approved Activities**

Positive Parenting	40	36
21 Hour Drug Awareness	72	65
Sensible Drinking	24	35
Career Preparation	16	21
Healthy Choices	0	16
Sub Totals	152	173
Overall Totals	242	259

8.28 The establishment had exceeded its targets for programmes for the year at the time of inspection. However, two additional Preferred Programmes – ‘Drug Relapse Prevention’ and ‘Problem Skills’ had not been run during the course of the year. Additionally, three local programmes which had been running at the time of the last follow up inspection were no longer in place: ‘Confidence Building’, ‘Apprehension’ and ‘Care Offending’. These were tailored to the needs of the young adults and consideration should be given to their reintroduction. Good links continue with the Addictions Unit and external agencies.

8.29 The courses offered by the Programmes Unit are in addition to the wide range of impressive and significant personal and social education programmes run in the Outlet Youth Centre (see paragraphs 7.12-7.16).

**Race Relations**

8.32 A Race Relations Manager was in post along with a nominated Race Relations Officer for each hall. Recent reallocation of tasks within the establishment meant that these staff were new to the task and were developing new systems and structures. The RRO’s had yet to undergo full training. Their role was additional to other tasks.

8.33 The Race Relations Group last met in January, although no minutes from this meeting were available. The arrangements for these meetings should be formalised and minutes taken. A focus group with ethnic minority prisoners had been held in Polmont in October 2003. This was facilitated by staff from SPS HQ and other establishments and a number of issues raised have now been addressed. The holding of such focus groups is to be welcomed.

8.34 There were 13 ethnic minority prisoners being held in Polmont at the time of inspection. Needs are identified during Induction and passed to the Race Relations Manager. A follow up interview is held within 24 hours, when possible. Information in languages other than English is available although this had not been required for some time.

8.35 During inspection the opportunity for Muslim prisoners to meet for prayers had been stopped as a result of an incident involving the individual during a prayer session in the Links Centre. This incident appeared to be linked to ongoing, outside, feuds between the young adults.

8.36 Five formal complaints using the Confidential Racial Incident Report Form (CRIR) had been made since September 2003. Four of these had been dealt with in an appropriate way. The fifth had only recently happened and had still to be investigated.

8.37 Overall, while systems were in place to deal with race issues, these were somewhat informal and need to be tightened up and a more formal approach adopted.

### **Chaplaincy**

8.38 At the time of inspection there was one full-time (Church of Scotland) and two part-time (one Church of Scotland, one Roman Catholic) Chaplains in post. One part-time post (Roman Catholic) was vacant and advertised. The Chaplains are contracted for 75 hours per week, although reported doing closer to 100 hours. The increase in prisoner numbers was adding to this pressure. In order to meet demand and streamline the process the Chaplains raised the possibility of having a key to individual cells, while recognising that this is not at present available in any other establishment.

8.39 A concern about ensuring that the young adults were able to attend services was raised. Services were held at 09.45 hours on a Saturday and Sunday. A Wednesday evening service had had to be discontinued as a result of staff not being able to escort the young adults from their hall to the Chaplaincy Centre. There was a worry that this scenario might soon start to affect the weekend services. While there might be valid reasons for staff not being able to escort young adults to the Centre, every effort should be made to do so.

8.40 In addition to providing religious services, the Chaplains are involved in a large number of one-to-one discussions and also in case work. They are also involved in much of the innovative work supporting families. They maintain close links with community, and are well integrated into the establishment and well supported by management.

### **Children under the Age of Sixteen**

8.41 Two children under 16 were detained in Polmont during the inspection. The circumstances behind their being there were as follows. One was on remand after serious charges and no place could be found in a secure unit; the other was in Polmont for the third time after secure units had repeatedly found his behaviour very disruptive. One was held in Lomond Hall, which houses under 18's. The other was in Nevis Hall, with prisoners who were difficult to accommodate in other halls.

8.42 Polmont held 15 boys under 16 in the year 2003-2004, two of whom were admitted twice and one three times. Nearly all were there for a few days only, but some, including both of those there during the inspection, could be in Polmont for weeks. The establishment has produced an "action plan" which covers the steps Polmont will take as soon as a boy under-16 is admitted. After a team meeting involving the child and parents, lawyers, social workers and prison staff a care plan is agreed: but no care plan could be found when it was asked for in connection with one of the children in custody.

8.43 Both of the under-16s spent much of the day in their cells. For one of them there would be opportunities for outside exercise every day, for PT once per week and for recreation twice per week; for the other there would be more opportunity to meet other young adults (over 16): at meals and daily exercise and recreation. Because one was convicted and the other was not, the arrangements were different: so one was visited by a social worker every day and had learning opportunities in his cell, while the other had very little contact with social workers or with education providers.

8.44 Even for a very short time, prison can offer very little to a child: when the time in prison stretches into weeks, the time alone in cell stretches into weeks. There is almost nothing for a child in prison to do, and no matter how appropriate staff attitudes are, the environment is not helpful for character development and changing offending behaviour. It

may well be true that some 15-year-olds are more mature than some 16-year-olds: but that is as much an argument for keeping 16-year-olds out of prison as it is for putting 15-year-olds in prison. In the past year, 5 of the boys admitted to Polmont were not 15 but 14 years old. The prospect of a 14-year-old mixing with a 21-year-old prisoner in prison conditions is a frightening prospect, so it is understandable that such boys are kept away from other prisoners as much as possible. But the result is that they spend a great deal of their time alone, in their cells, with very little in the way of useful activity.

8.45 Both of the boys spoke well of relationships with Polmont staff. The halls in which they lived were not the worst conditions in the establishment, but they were far from the best. **It is recommended that children under the age of 16 are not held in a prison.**

### **Visiting Committee**

8.46 The Visiting Committee has a high profile in Polmont. There is good evidence that its members take their responsibilities very seriously and engage regularly not only with the concerns of individual prisoners but with the health and progress of the whole establishment. A powerful illustration of their more general concerns was the clear statement by their representatives that “the thing that has exercised us most” in the past year was the possible implications of financial cuts in Polmont. They indicated vigorously their belief that these cuts would have serious implications for staff and prisoners. In particular they identified staffing levels as much lower than they believed was best for safety and for proper work in reducing reoffending.

8.47 Matters which were most regularly raised with the Visiting Committee by prisoners were particularly to do with aspects of punishment. Prisoners spoke of a lack of consistency in punishment, and objected to their perception of closed visits and the loss of recreation being used as a form of punishment.

8.48 Other concerns raised by the Visiting Committee were the contrast between the very good accommodation in Iona Hall and the very bad accommodation in Argyll and Spey Halls; the insufficiency of food served at meals; and their observation of members of staff shouting at prisoners using their last names in situations which were not otherwise stressful.



They singled out for particular appreciation the Health Centre, the Links Centre and the Youth Centre.

## **9. SERVICES**

### **Estates and Facilities**

9.1 The Estates agenda at Polmont is dominated by the SPS's Development Plan. The first stage of this was the building of Iona Hall. Funding has now been agreed for a new regimes complex and it is hoped that work on this will start in the summer of 2004. The new facility should provide approximately 300 flexible activity places.

9.2 EPIC was installed in Spey and Argyll last year. The ceiling lights in the cells are also in the process of being replaced. This has improved conditions for prisoners in these halls.

### **Health and Safety**

9.3 Polmont has a First Line Manager who is the full time Health & Safety co-ordinator. Each area of the prison also has a Health & Safety representative who attend monthly meetings chaired by the Head of Inclusion. The H & S co-ordinator's activities generally relate to staff matters, but he does have responsibility for accident investigations and safe systems of work for prisoners. He also provides material for prisoner induction.

9.4 The structure supporting Health and Safety management in Polmont is good. It is apparent that senior management take seriously issues relating to health and safety. Minutes of the monthly meeting show a good awareness of issues locally and nationally and there are reactive and proactive action points. The notice board which informs staff and visitors on H & S matters in Polmont is very prominently displayed opposite the entrance to the prison.

### **Human Resources**

9.5 The HR Manager has line responsibility for the full time Partnership Liaison Representative, a Staff Training Manager, a Personnel Officer and two administrators. Both the HR Manager and the PLR spoke very positively of how well the Polmont "partnership" worked.

9.6 However, there had been five “Failures to Agree” submitted the week before the inspection. These related to the way in which Polmont Management proposed to find the 5% savings sought by the SPS board. It was apparent that despite this, the relationship had improved as talks were ongoing.

9.7 Polmont was successful in retaining IIP status in 2002 and 2004.

9.8 Staff absence is a major problem in Polmont. Managers are allowed to offer ex gratia payments to staff to help cover vacant posts caused by absence from assault or because staff are needed to act up to cover a management post. This is vital to help in covering posts. On the first day of our inspection there were 33 staff absent from work because they were unwell, 27 of these staff were absent from an operational area.

9.9 The prison has a stated objective to have staff fulfil the role of mentor or coach to the young adults. Disruptions to staffing make this difficult.

### **Catering**

9.10 The Catering Department was experiencing some pressure due to staffing shortages at the time of inspection. On occasion it was necessary to “borrow” staff from other areas of the prison. The shortages were in part the result of the very positive and necessary requirements for training. The kitchen was a popular job with prisoners and relationships in the work place were good.

9.11 The quality of food was good at the point of cooking, and despite having to be transported in bulk was also good in the halls. There was a good choice of menu with a healthy choice at each meal time. Special diets are catered for. Young adults, and some staff noted that the quantity of food was often insufficient.

9.12 The kitchen did not have a complaints book, preferring to address any concerns directly with the young adult. While this might resolve problems quickly, it could also be a bit intimidating for some and a complaints book should be put in place. A “Food Forum” exists in each hall but it is unclear if the outcome of these and any suggestion made are relayed to the kitchen. Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that this happens.

## **Laundry**

9.13 The laundry needs of Polmont are now too great for the existing facility to manage. There are six washing machines and three dryers. One of the dryers was broken during inspection and had been for some time. Polmont has to send much of its dirty washing to other establishments to be washed. Prisoners reported that their clothing or bedding often came back from the laundry wet.

9.14 The laundry employs 10 prisoners per session from an overall list of 28. The prisoners come from Cramond Hall. There is no certificated work undertaken in the laundry. Much of the prisoners' day seems to be made up of sitting around waiting for washing or drying cycles to be completed. Items are not ironed in the laundry, they are only folded.

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

## **Canteen**

9.16 A bag and tag system is in place, operated by a private company. Untried prisoners receive canteen three times a week, convicted once a week. There is a good range of items available. The Inspectorate heard few complaints about the operation of the canteen, apart from the price of some goods. Some prisoners also noted that they would welcome more substantial food items rather than confectionery to supplement their meals.

## **10. GOOD PRACTICE**

10.1 The “care orderly room” where if a young adult is found to have one positive test, he is offered the opportunity to have a case conference with several staff involved to look at what help might be required. This avoids the need for disciplinary action to be taken following a first failure (paragraph 4.13).

10.2 The process of reviewing how far the targets in Community Integration Plans and Sentence Management Plans have been met (paragraph 5.17).

10.3 All young adults attend the Links Centre one week before liberation for a half-day course during which they are appraised by agencies in their local areas. Where appropriate, appointments are made with the local agencies (paragraph 5.17).

10.4 A Family Awareness Induction Evening which takes place on a fortnightly basis offers the opportunity for families to have a limited tour of the prisons, receive information and have an extra visit. This helps alleviate fears and adopt a supportive and active role in the care of the young adults in custody (paragraphs 5.18 and 8.2).

10.5 The therapeutic focus groups in the Health Centre benefit young adults who require a high level of support to change their lifestyle practices (paragraph 6.29).

10.6 The fact that there is a dedicated Mental Health Team (paragraph 6.34).

10.7 The work of the Youth Outlet Centre generally, but especially the range of personal and social education programmes available (paragraph 7.16).

10.8 Notice boards are placed on the walls of the waiting room by theme (paragraph 8.4).

## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *For Ministers*

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

### *For Establishment/SPS*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **12. POINTS OF NOTE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SOURCES OF EVIDENCE**

Written material and statistics received from Polmont prior to inspection

Prison's self-assessment

Governor's briefing

SPS 2003 Prisoner Survey

Polmont records

SPS background material

Discussion with prisoners

Discussions with prisoners' families

Focus groups with prisoners

Interviews with prisoners

Interviews with prison staff

Focus groups with staff

Observations

**INSPECTION TEAM**

Andrew R C McLellan

HM Chief Inspector

Rod MacCowan

HM Deputy Chief Inspector

David McAllister

HM Assistant Chief Inspector

David Abernethy

HM Inspector

Alastair Delaney

Education Adviser

Jim Rooney

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Frances Smith

Nursing and Medical Adviser

Tom Leckie

Addictions and Social Work Adviser

Observer

Jane Irvine

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary