



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

THE OPEN ESTATE

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

CONTENTS

PAGE(S)

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	PREAMBLE	2-3
3.	ASSESSMENT	4-14

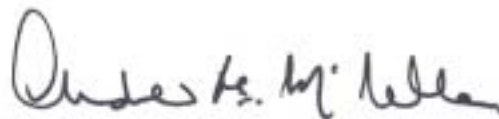
1. INTRODUCTION

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

1.2 The Inspection Team comprised:

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2. PREAMBLE

2.1 Many of the things that really matter in a prison are well done in the Open Estate. Previous reports have commented on them, and this follow-up report also acknowledges them. Some of the central issues which are inspected under the headings of decency and safety are dealt with very satisfactorily indeed at Castle Huntly and Noranside: accommodation, food, physical safety, healthcare, visits. In addition, this inspection confirmed the statement in the report of 2002 that *the range and quality of placements and project work available to long-term prisoners in the Open Estate was impressive*. A follow-up inspection, however, by its nature is likely to concentrate on new developments, and on matters of concern raised either in previous reports or in the prison's own self-assessment.

2.2 The quotation above from last year's report was carefully worded to exclude from the commendation what was available to short-term prisoners. There are arguments for restricting the Open Estate to long-term prisoners, but at present, there is a mixture of prisoners with different length of sentences. A year ago there were real concerns that short-term prisoners were not able to access the facilities of the Open Estate on the same terms as long-term prisoners. This report shows that some of these concerns are now less acute: a beginning has been made in addressing the problem, and at the same time the number of short-term prisoners has fallen.

2.3 It is not possible to report so positively on progress on two very important matters raised in last year's report. At that time Sentence Management at Noranside was described as "chaotic". This report indicates that now that whole process of Sentence Management – quite fundamental to prisoners as they prepare for release – is scarcely taking place at all at Noranside. It has also deteriorated at Castle Huntly.

2.4 The general issue of preparation for release is perhaps the biggest disappointment of this report. It was highlighted a year ago as the central question facing the Open Estate *how does an open prison prepare prisoners for release?* Steps have been taken to begin to reorganise employment within the prison, with a view to an impressive scheme which will integrate both sites: but at this point the actual result has been to reduce the employment available at Castle Huntly. A beginning has been made in the development of an appropriate drug strategy, including some programmes; that is to be welcomed, although it is only a

beginning. There are indications that planning has been done and reports have been prepared: but preparation for release which is actually at this point available for prisoners is scarcely different from a year ago, when it was raised as **the principal question**.

2.5 Last year's report indicated that it was being written at a critical time for the Open Estate. *The decision to integrate the two establishments¹ provides the opportunity to reassess the purpose of open prisons and build on good practice developed over the years. To achieve this, a clear commitment has to be made by the Scottish Prison Service to the two establishments, based, in our opinion, on the premise that open prisons must be dedicated to preparing prisoners for release.* The integration of the two establishments has not been completed: many aspects of the Open Estate exist as two separate entities. While the SPS Board has expressed its support for the continuation and development of the Open Estate on many occasions, at this critical time in its development it was surprising to learn that the newly-appointed Governor had spent a considerable amount of time away from Castle Huntly and Noranside working on a national project.

¹ Decision taken in October 2001.

3. ASSESSMENT

Safety

Security and Order

3.1 As part of the integration of both sites, a Security Review Group and Joint Intelligence Unit have been created for the Open Estate. The Unit is situated at Noranside but uses the intranet to maintain good communications between the two sites. It is immediately noticeable, however, that some new security is in place: e.g. protective screens at reception at Castle Huntly to ensure security of IT and radio systems, and new gate arrangements at Noranside. The main security issues identified were absconding and bringing drugs into the Open Estate. Resources from both sites were pooled to create the funding for an Intelligence Analyst post. This has helped in creating a single point of contact for staff, other agencies and other parts of the SPS.

3.2 A new and transparent system for managing "Returns to Closed Conditions" has been introduced. This makes it much easier to analyse, if requested, the reasons why prisoners were returned.

Absconds

3.3 Between January and end September 2003 there were 54 absconds from the Open Estate (42 from Castle Huntly and 12 from Noranside).

Violence

3.4 There have been no prisoner-on-prisoner or prisoner-on-staff assaults since the last inspection.

Relationships

3.5 Relationships between staff and prisoners are excellent.

Reception

3.6 The two Receptions currently in use are drab and dreary rooms with little space. Part of the planned Links Centre in Castle Huntly will be a new Reception facility for all transfers to the Open Estate: and this is to be welcomed.

Orderly Room

3.7 The procedures in the Orderly Rooms on both sites were carried out according to Prison Rules and Orderly Room Guidance. The needs of natural justice and fairness were met. The practice of referring cases to the Sentence Management Board (mentioned elsewhere in this report), is an innovative development which will help assess risk and needs separately from the disciplinary procedure.

Prisoner Complaints

3.8 There have been 73 prisoner complaints so far this year. Fifty of these have been in Castle Huntly and 23 in Noranside. The tracking system on both sites and the outcomes observed on the forms viewed were all satisfactory.

Decency

Accommodation

3.9 Accommodation is generally clean and decent. There is a mixture of single cells, double cells and five person dormitories. Prisoners can exercise some influence over who they share with in most situations. All cells are spacious and well maintained. Alba House in Noranside is particularly impressive: all prisoners have access to toilets and showers in every area at all times. In Noranside they can also access a telephone during lock up periods. At time of inspection this access to telephones was not available to prisoners in Castle Huntly.

3.10 Prisoners in Castle Huntly said that boredom was a problem and that a better library facility and access to computers would help to pass the time. Recreation facilities are not as good as they could be and the Prisoner Forum could usefully look at how they can improve upon what is available. On the other hand, prisoners reported that recreation was excellent at Noranside and that access to the gym in particular was very good.

Health Care

3.11 The provision of health care in both Castle Huntly and Noranside continues to be satisfactory. In the 2003 Prisoner Survey, 92% of prisoners in Castle Huntly and 99% of prisoners at Noranside indicated that they got on “ok to very well” with nursing staff. In a year-on-year comparison satisfaction rating however, health care has fallen at Castle Huntly from a high of 85% in 2002 to 68% in 2003 and has risen at Noranside from 67% in 2001 and 2002 to 86% in 2003. Generally however, prisoner comments about health care have been positive.

3.12 Methadone is now issued at Castle Huntly and a comprehensive system has been put in place to ensure that prisoners on a methadone programme are provided with methadone at the weekend by Perth Prison (there is no nursing provision at Castle Huntly at the weekend). They are also provided with prescriptions for use when on home leave.

3.13 A gap in provision of physiotherapy sessions in Castle Huntly was identified at the last inspection. This has been addressed, with referrals for physiotherapy now being dealt with through a community provider. The Health Centre has also changed the system whereby prisoners previously had to report sick within the residential area before being directed to the Health Centre. Now prisoners who wish to report sick, do so direct to the Health Centre. The nursing service is still not required to provide an input to pre-home leave sessions, but in practice individuals are often counselled on a one-to-one basis. It would be much more satisfactory for this to be formalised into pre-home leave and pre-release health awareness sessions.

Induction

3.14 At the time of the last inspection it was disappointing to note that induction did not always take place. This continues to be the case. At Castle Huntly the induction programme aims to ensure that within 72 hours of admission to the prison, an admission interview will be held and prisoners will have been directed to key areas of the prison. Prisoners were unanimous in their view that this did not always happen and that most of the information they received came from other prisoners. On the other hand, the staff who were interviewed, claimed that the induction procedure happened as intended. It seems that the thoroughness of

the induction process still depends on the particular members of staff conducting the induction process. This needs to be addressed and a monitoring system put in place at Castle Huntly to ensure that all prisoners receive an adequate induction focused on their particular needs.

3.15 As part of the induction system all prisoners are allocated to a home leave group. These groups are arranged geographically which allows the prison to manage transport, particularly for the large numbers returning to the west coast. This is a good example of a well thought out and simple solution being put in place to manage what is potentially a difficult management task.

3.16 At Noranside, as with Castle Huntly, the main change in the past year which impacts on induction is that where admissions used to arrive only on a Monday they now arrive on any day of the week. At the time of the last inspection *this system had changed during the week of the inspection and appeared to be in some disarray*. This appears to have continued: there are no longer dedicated induction officers and the induction post is not always filled. Consequently, induction for individual prisoners tends to be hit and miss. As with Castle Huntly this is clearly an unsatisfactory situation. If Castle Huntly is developed as the induction centre for the Open Estate then presumably this issue will be addressed. However in the interim, Noranside should ensure that all prisoners receive an induction suitable for their needs.

3.17 A new role of logistics manager has been in place to ensure that both Castle Huntly and Noranside are kept full. The net result has been that the average occupancy rate of each prison has risen since the last report and stands at 95-100% capacity. This work has also informed the Admissions Project Group and the “Marketing” Project Group which is looking at what information prisoners might receive prior to being transferred to the Open Estate. A project group has recently examined the whole issue of admissions to the Open Estate. This could radically change the induction arrangements for both sites.

Race Relations

3.18 Race Relations Officers and good arrangements for dealing with race relations issues were in place in both sites. There had been no complaints since the last inspection.

Catering

3.19 The food continues to be of a high standard in Castle Huntly and Noranside.

Laundry

3.20 The arrangements for laundry at Noranside did not appear to be adequate for the size of the prisoner population. The laundry comprises two washing machines and one tumble drier. At the time of the visit the drier was in use and both washing machines were full of wet clothes.

Preparation for Release

Sentence Management

3.21 Sentence management gives cause for considerable concern.

3.22 At the time of the last report the situation at Castle Huntly was satisfactory, with only five assessments outstanding. In the month prior to inspection the number of expected completions were: -

• Initial interviews	17/17
• Psychometric tests	15/30
• Screening tools	5/10
• PBRS	5/10
• Repeat Risk and Needs Assessment	5/10
• Summary Risk and Needs Assessments	0/5
• Summary Action Plans	0/5

3.23 A number of reasons have been given for this, including the transfer of trained risk and needs officers to Noranside; cases being delayed because documentation was not up to standard; and poor or non-existent action plans or other documentation. Whatever the reason, the situation has deteriorated since the last inspection. A sample of Sentence Management

folders and documentation were examined, and where work is done it is recorded to a satisfactory standard.

3.24 At the last inspection, Sentence Management at Noranside was described as *chaotic*. Unfortunately, the situation is now worse than that. The Inspectorate was advised that from January until August no Sentence Management work had been carried out, beyond initial interviews. Following the last inspection a local document, “The Reinvigoration of Sentence Management”, was completed, which identified the backlog of risk and needs assessments at March 2003 as standing at 41 and requiring between 400 and 600 hours work. While a number of recommendations were made, one thing which appears not to have happened was a resulting reinvigoration of Sentence Management. A further report was delivered on the 18th of August 2003 which indicated of the document of March 2003 that *all the major problems contributing to the present situation were highlighted in the report period it is now almost September and it would appear there has been no progress on any front*. Amongst the conclusion the report of August 2003 notes *there is not one reason why risk and needs assessments are not being done at Noranside*.

3.25 A local decision was taken to draw a line under the backlog and re-commence the Sentence Management process in September and October and sufficient work had been carried out to provide some confidence that they would be completed within a reasonable timescale. However there was already a significant backlog moving into November’s cases.

3.26 It is difficult to understand why the highly unsatisfactory situation identified a year ago has got even worse. A years worth of Sentence Management and, importantly, initial and repeat risk and needs assessment with long-term prisoners due for release into the community has not been completed. Were it not for the work which has been initiated in September and October, Sentence Management arrangements at Noranside would have been the subject of a formal recommendation in this report.

3.27 A major innovation since the last report has been the setting up of a Sentence Management Board for both sites. All prisoners are seen by a multi-disciplinary group within four weeks and an agreed plan is drawn up. This works in parallel with, but does not always work within, the SPS Sentence Management Scheme. However the principle of the Board allows a “holistic” view to be taken of individual needs and allows realistic referral to the

programmes which are available. The operation of the Sentence Management Scheme needs to be integrated with the work of the Sentence Management Boards. The Inspectorate will monitor the implementation of Sentence Management in the Open Estate during the coming year and will examine it in detail at the time of the next full inspection.

Work Placements in the Community

3.28 The number of work placements has increased since the last inspection and access to a placement is less of a problem than it was then. Plans are in place to further increase the number available. Short-term prisoners now have the same access as long termers in Castle Huntly. Both the increase in placements and the greater access for STPs are welcomed.

3.29 The prison continues to provide good quality and wide ranging placements and this area of work is a major element in the integration of the two sites. From November it is intended that all work placements will be managed by Castle Huntly. It is also intended that the training and certification for these will take place at Noranside. The integration plans aim to ensure that within a year all prisoners will be either participating in an outside work placement or project; undergoing training; or working within the prisons in a service capacity (passman, kitchens, cleaning party, etc).

Links with the Community

3.30 Links with the community continue to be good and the project teams were reported as being busy. The Inspectorate suggested at the last inspection that project workers might be provided with some form of certificate but the range of tasks performed had meant that this had not been possible.

Family Contact

3.31 The arrangements for visits and family contact continue to be good at Castle Huntly. Home leave was considered by many prisoners to be the single reason for being in the Open Estate. Arrangements for visits were also very good at Noranside. Visits are particularly busy at the weekends, and the quality is enhanced by the fact that families can walk around

the grounds (within identified boundaries). Home leaves were also welcomed although there were issues raised about adequate preparation for the first home leave for some prisoners.

Access to Work

3.32 The Open Estate finds itself “in limbo” at this time. There are plans in place to transform internal work opportunities to fit the employability agenda and ensure there is less duplication and more flexibility. Unfortunately, at the time of the visit, this was having a detrimental effect on prisoners in Castle Huntly. Where there had been an employment centre gainfully employing over forty prisoners every day, the building was now empty with the prisoners added to other parties or remaining in the wings. There is a plan for the building to be transformed into a new "Links Centre" but funding and staff are not in place and it is hoped that this situation can be quickly resolved.

Addictions

3.33 Random Mandatory Drug testing indicated an underlying negative rate of 77% in Castle Huntly, and 72% in Noranside. This means that 77% of prisoners who are randomly tested in Castle Huntly will test negative for drugs (compared to 64% at the last inspection), and 72% in Noranside will test negative (compared to 83% at the last inspection).

3.34 The new policy on the management of prisoners in open prisons who test positive for drugs has had a noticeable impact. Firstly, the management of individuals has been separated from the disciplinary aspects of the failed drug test. An individual who tests positive is now referred to the Sentence Management Board for a case review. The Sentence Management Board have the option to keep the individual within the Open Estate, with restrictions placed for a time on their access to the regime. Alternatively, they can downgrade the prisoner and return him to HMP Perth for a case review and reassessment. Prisoners value this change and it has removed the confusion which both prisoners and staff expressed at the time of the last inspection.

3.35 A number of programmes are in place to address addiction problems (see paragraphs 3.39 – 3.40). ‘Narcotics Anonymous’ is also in place and prisoners can attend ‘Alcoholics Anonymous’. Both groups run within the prisons and within the communities. One clear

development is Cranstoun external counselling which occurs during home leaves or extended day release. Home leaves can be changed in order to facilitate contact with community-based counselling services. There are still no 'booster' programmes for those who have undergone programmes earlier in their sentence.

3.36 Following suggestions in the last inspection report a comprehensive Open Estate drugs policy was launched in April 2003; there are still no drug free groups; work is proceeding on extending nursing provision to ensure weekends cover; and methadone and detoxification programmes have now been introduced in Castle Huntly.

3.37 An addiction team has been set up with a drug strategy co-ordinator and eight officers identified as addictions officers. This allows a degree of continuity in dealing with prisoners who test positive and almost guarantees that there will always be an addiction officer on site. A good referral process appears to be in place supported by voluntary drug testing.

3.38 On an 'as needed' basis home leave, harm reduction and discussions groups have taken place. These cover application for home leave, licence conditions, tolerance issues over those issues and practical first aid. In Castle Huntly there is a clear need for a systematic approach to pre-release particularly pre-first home leave release. The development of the Links Centre at Noranside has provided a focus for this work and is to be welcomed.

Programmes

3.39 During the last inspection it was noted that *no routine programmes designed to prepare prisoners for release were being delivered and introduction of such programmes should be given a high priority.* While programmes are not routine several have been introduced, relating mainly to addictions issues:

- SMART Recovery (delivered in Castle Huntly and planned for Noranside)
- Drugs Action for Change (to be piloted in Castle Huntly)
- Guide to Sensible Drinking (delivered in both Castle Huntly and Noranside)

- Health Checks (delivered in both Castle Huntly and Noranside)
- Community Sports Leaders (delivered in Castle Huntly and planned for Noranside)

3.40 Efforts are being made to focus programmes on preparation for release, and reducing harm.

Education

3.41 Both prisons continue to run separate Education Units under Contract from the same provider. As the integration of the two prisons proceeds it would seem logical to re-examine this arrangement.

Castle Huntly

3.42 The accommodation is unchanged from the previous inspection and there has been no movement towards creating a “base” for the education staff. The library continues to be located in a portacabin and there is little evidence of systematic organisation. However, on this occasion it was clarified that the library does not lie within the remit of the Education Unit. The management of the library therefore needs to be both clarified and some clear planning for library provision put in place.

3.43 The curriculum continues to be balanced and designed to meet the needs of the individual prisoners. The KPI for prisoner learning hours was met in the last reporting year and is currently on target for the current reporting year. No basic skills assessment is carried out, the assumption being that this will have been done at other prisons. However, a learning plan is completed for each prisoner who uses the education centre. A sample of learning plans was examined and found to be both detailed and complete.

3.44 Induction poses a problem for education. No list of newly admitted prisoners is supplied to the Education Unit and it is left to prisoners make their own arrangements. A more structured method of ensuring that prisoners attend for an education induction should be found. One commendable development is that, in common with Perth Prison, substantial funds have been identified through Community Learning for one-to-one and small group work around literacy.

3.45 Clearly the work of the Unit is valued and in the 2003 Prisoner Survey 95% of prisoners indicated that they got on “ok to very well” with education staff.

Noranside

3.46 As described in the last inspection accommodation at Noranside continues to be bright, attractive and adequate for needs. The curriculum is well balanced and, as with Castle Huntly, was geared to the needs of individual prisoners. One welcome development was the increase in the number of prisoners attending full-time college placements.

3.47 The Education Unit achieved its KPI target in Prisoner Learning Hours despite the fact that twelve prisoners were attending college and on average twenty five prisoners worked outside the prison. Previous attempts to run evening classes have been unsuccessful but some consideration should be given to these ‘out-workers’ who are unable to attend most days.

3.48 As with Castle Huntly, attendance by prisoners for induction purposes appears to be hit and miss. On days when there is an induction officer in place, all prisoners attend on a Wednesday. When there are no induction officers it is left to prisoners to make their own arrangements, although at Noranside the Education Department does have a list of new admissions. A check of attendance can, however, be made via the first formal interview which each newly-admitted prisoner has at the Sentence Management Board which is attended by the Education Centre Manager.

3.49 Due to the nature of the Contract, the Education Unit’s ability to contribute to the wider employability agenda is limited to offering core skill modules and other classroom work. Prisoners were satisfied with provision and the 2003 Prisoner Survey reported that 100% of prisoners indicated that they got on ok to very well with education staff.