



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

Report on

HMP & YOI Cornton Vale

May 2006

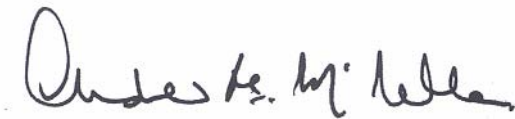


SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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 HMP & YOI Cornton Vale between 27 February – 3 March 2006.

Six recommendations and a number of other observations are made.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew R C McLellan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

ANDREW R C McLELLAN
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
for Scotland

May 2006

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1. PREAMBLE

1.1 In the last ten years the number of women in prison in Scotland has doubled. At the time of inspection every woman prisoner in Scotland was being held at Cornton Vale: this is the result of the closure of the unit at Dumfries and the temporary closure of the units at Inverness and Aberdeen and the return of the female prisoners who had been held in Greenock. A new accommodation block has been completed in the course of the last year at Cornton Vale, and this report makes favourable comment on it. However there are more prisoners than ever before at Cornton Vale; and many of these prisoners are in shared cell accommodation.

1.2 On the first day of inspection the number of prisoners was 326 and in November 2005 it was over 350. In 1998 the Chief Inspector of Prisons and the Chief Inspector of Social Work published *Women Offenders: a Safer Way*. That document concludes *The aim of these joint strategies should be to limit the female population at Cornton Vale from over 170 to 100 or less on a daily basis by the end of the year 2000*. Today that sounds almost fanciful.

1.3 Apart from the dramatic rise in sheer numbers, with all that that implies for limitation of opportunity for prisoners and pressure on staff, the most worrying feature of the increase in population at Cornton Vale is the increase in the number of women convicted of violent offences. It is no longer true, if it ever was true, that most women prisoners are convicted of trivial offences. Half of the women in Cornton Vale at the time of inspection had been convicted of crimes involving violence. On the other hand it is good to be able to record that not one girl under 16 was detained during the past year, at a time when 18 boys under 16 were detained in Polmont YOI.

1.4 The opening of Wallace House gives access to very good living conditions for up to 84 prisoners. The report describes the accommodation: and in particular, it welcomes the provision of a shower in every room. The cells are bright, clean and spacious. The communal living area, used for dining, recreation and for passing the time with other prisoners, is attractive. Prisoners spoke highly of the quality of the accommodation and about the good atmosphere engendered in the Hall, which they believed to be at least in part as a result of the design. It is disappointing that, as a result of high numbers of prisoners, so many of the cells have to be occupied by two people.

1.5 It is also disappointing to find so little activity in Wallace House in the evening. After work or education there is very little that prisoners actually do. Prisoners in Wallace House are often bored. Indeed, “boredom” is a much-used word by prisoners throughout Cornton Vale. Part of the boredom which they feel may be the consequence of the lack of experience which many prisoners will have had in managing their own time and in making their own entertainment; part of the boredom may be as a result of the absence of more creative and engaging opportunities within the prison; and part of the boredom may be because of the time, and the increasing amount of time, which some prisoners are spending locked in their cells. For prisoners on remand in particular, the report shows that time in cell is increasing. For a remand prisoner, addicted, mentally ill, frightened, and separated from her family, time locked in her cell may not only be boring: it may be very threatening.

1.6 A previous report was critical of the provision for young women under the age of 21 at Cornton Vale. This report recognises real progress. At the time of inspection all convicted young women and most unconvicted ones were held in one block which was recently refurbished and provided decent living conditions. Much more is now available to them in terms of work and education, although their evenings, like the evenings of most prisoners, can be very boring. The report makes very positive reference to a project being carried out in the prison under the sponsorship of Young Enterprise Scotland. Seven young women have been engaged in the process of setting up a small business, “Destiny’s Design” which will manufacture and sell gift boxes. The project provides valuable business experience: but it also makes a very significant contribution to the development of communication skills, self-confidence and self-esteem in these young women.

1.7 The report comments very positively on the Community Placements Scheme in operation at Cornton Vale. The most positive comments were those of employers who have provided the placements. Indeed two different placement supervisors referred to improvements to working practice which had been introduced by prisoners to the placement workplace. Reports published in the last three years on every prison which provides community placements have recognised the high quality of this scheme. By preparing prisoners to work in the community, and by helping them to develop social skills and self-confidence, community placements play a significant part in making prisoners less likely to re-offend on release and so help to make Scotland safer.

1.8 No matter was raised more frequently by prisoners and by prison staff during the inspection than the conditions in which prisoners are held under escort while being taken to and from the establishment. Their concern is about the practice called “double-cuffing”: all prisoners leaving Cornton Vale for any reason (except those on work placements) will have their wrists handcuffed together and then handcuffed to a custody officer. So to be exposed to public view can be very upsetting. Prison staff told inspectors of children’s hearings where no mother was present because prisoners from Cornton Vale could not bring themselves to be present in front of their children “double-cuffed”; staff also told of women refusing to go to hospital for medical treatment when they learned that they would be double-cuffed. Two prisoners had recently given birth. Their experience was of being taken to the maternity hospital double-cuffed; and of being handcuffed in the labour room almost until the birth itself. They were immediately handcuffed again after giving birth. No doubt there is always a balance to be found between security and humanity: in the case of women giving birth the security considerations would need to be extraordinarily high to justify this practice. It must be stopped.

1.9 Any report on Cornton Vale must take into account the desperate state in which most of the prisoners are when they arrive at the prison gate. “Desperate” does not mean “distressed”, although it often includes that. It means the combination of ill health, both mental and physical, addiction - especially and almost universally to heroin, the terrible need to attack their own bodies; and personal histories of great sadness, very often including abuse and sexual abuse as children. No-one who has not been in Cornton Vale can grasp the amount of pain that is hidden behind its fence. No-one who has been in Cornton Vale can forget it. *These are very damaged women. What will prison do for them?*¹

1.10 This report will provide some answers to that question. It comments on some good work with addictions: but it is a small contribution to a huge problem in the lives of these women. It comments on good mental health work: in particular it highlights the establishment’s work to prevent suicide and reduce self-harm. The figures are remarkable. There has been a reduction in self-harm from 130 incidents in 2002-03 to 58 incidents in 2005-06 to date of inspection, a period in which the population increased by 20%. The report comments on good addictions work: but against the scale of the problem it is inevitably a limited contribution. The report comments on the good relationships which exist between

¹ Cornton Vale Follow Up Inspection Report, 2004

prisoners and most members of staff: there are prisoners in Cornton Vale who have never had any relationship with any male person which did not involve violence until they were put in the custody of prison officers. The “Little Cherubs” initiative provides an excellent opportunity for certain prisoners to have good visits with certain children. On the other hand the report indicates that there has been a reduction in psychology service at Cornton Vale, despite the rising numbers.

1.11 There is no doubt that being in prison can do some things for some women. It is a terrible comment on Scotland today that it is easy to meet prisoners who feel safer in prison than they do outside. But it would be wrong to suppose that for most prisoners in Cornton Vale their time of imprisonment is likely to be an opportunity to be healed of the desperate things that are wrong with them in body, mind and spirit when they are admitted.

2. POPULATION, ACCOMMODATION AND ROUTINES

Population

2.1 In 1995-96 the average daily population of women prisoners in Scotland was 174. In 2000-01 this had increased to 207. On 29 November 2005 Cornton Vale locked up 353 prisoners. On the first day of this inspection there were 326 prisoners living in Cornton Vale: 212 convicted adults, 82 untried adults, 21 convicted under-21's and 11 untried under-21's. The establishment now has a design capacity of 375 and is contracted to hold 310 prisoners.

Accommodation and Routines

2.2 Cornton Vale has six residential units and the Independent Living Units, described below.

Ross House

2.3 Ross House holds untried prisoners on admission and prisoners assessed as being vulnerable. The hall is on two floors with a corridor annex comprising four single rooms used to house prisoners who require to be kept separate from others as a result of their behaviour or state of mind. This Annex is called the "Management Suite". There are 10 other single rooms, 15 double rooms and four triple rooms. Ross can hold up to 56 prisoners. On the first day of inspection 50 women were living there.

2.4 Ross House was redesigned in 1998 to turn it into an open and bright environment. There is a large communal area in the centre of the hall, including the staff desk. Officers are able to see every cell door, except the Management Suite, from this desk.

2.5 There is electric power in-cell (EPIC) in every room, except the rooms in the Management Suite. All rooms have integral sanitation. Although the rooms are quite bare, the standard of decoration is reasonable. There is CCTV coverage in all communal areas. There are ten showers and two baths: all of these are of a good standard and are kept clean by the prisoners.

2.6 Recreation facilities consist of three large rooms. One is designated a “quiet room” where prisoners can sit and talk quietly or read during association periods. The other two are a television/cinema room with a large screen television, and a room with a selection of games. There are three telephones in the hall. Each has a canopy ensuring a level of privacy. Ross prisoners have access to the fresh air every day in a yard adjacent to the hall. The hall also has its own dining room. Prisoners collect their meal from a servery and eat in a cafeteria-style room.

2.7 Some of the women in Ross said that they were in prison by choice: they had deliberately offended to “manufacture” their admission to Cornton Vale because they felt safer inside than outside. Staff confirmed this and spoke of their frustration at the lack of alternatives to prison for some women. Ross House fulfils a very demanding task on behalf of Cornton Vale and society. It has to manage a transient population of women arriving in a variety of states. It must stabilise them and then prepare them to move on to other units in Cornton Vale or go back into society.

Younger House

2.8 Younger House holds remand prisoners for whom there is no space in Ross House or Skye House, and convicted prisoners awaiting transfer to Bruce House. It has 41 cells in six units over two floors. There is a larger cell in each unit which can hold two prisoners. The establishment tries to cap the population in Younger at 47. On the first day of inspection 49 women were living there.

2.9 The six units have access to night sanitation during lock up periods. There are now cameras in each section, so the delays in opening the cells that house two prisoners are minimised. Prisoners are supervised using the cameras rather than having to wait for an officer to be present. All cells have EPIC and a sink.

2.10 The cells in Younger, as in Peebles, Skye and Bruce, are in enclosed narrow corridors with lots of corners and alcoves. As a result, supervision can be difficult.

2.11 The cells have recently been refurbished. This work included the cells being re-fitted and decorated and new call points fitted. A fire suppression system was also installed. Most

cells were clean and tidy and the standard of decoration was reasonable. During the week of inspection some of the cells on the ground floor were infested with ants. Prisoners said this was often the case. The prison should address this issue.

2.12 The women collect their meals from a servery and dine together in one of the wing association rooms. There are adequate bathing/showering facilities in each section. There are three telephones, two downstairs and one upstairs. All three have canopies ensuring a degree of privacy.

2.13 Recreation facilities consist of three rooms, one downstairs and two upstairs. Prisoners can watch DVD's or television. There are also some board games. The second downstairs recreation room has been converted into an arts and crafts activity room. Prisoners can only use this area when under the supervision of an officer. This means that access is very limited.

2.14 Younger also has four "back cells". These cells are used for prisoners who require to be segregated. The cells are located in a corridor adjacent to the rest of the hall. The corridor has CCTV coverage. The cells have an emergency button linked to the staff office in Younger. The back cells have no beds, no electrical power, no toilets and no sinks. Prisoners have to ask staff to let them out to use the toilet or else use a chamber pot. The prisoner sleeps on a mattress on the floor. These cells are also used when the Management Suite in Ross is full. They are sometimes used for prisoners at risk of self-harm. Whether used for prisoners who are a danger to themselves or a danger to staff or other prisoners these cells are unacceptable. The back cells should be fitted with beds, EPIC and integral sanitation.

Bruce House

2.15 Bruce House holds adult convicted prisoners. Sentence length can vary from a few weeks to life. The hall has eight units with seven cells in each unit. Some cells in units 3, 5, 7 and 8 are designated as "doubles", although some of these are the same size as the singles. The double cells are very cramped for two people. There is CCTV in each unit. This has helped with access to night sanitation for those sharing cells in the same way as it has in Younger. The establishment tries to cap the population in Bruce at 61. On the first day of inspection 62 women were living there.

2.16 Bruce is currently being refurbished. Unit 2 was closed during the inspection so women normally housed there were sharing cells in other units. The block has four telephones, three downstairs and one upstairs. All of the telephones have canopies. There is an arts and crafts room. There are adequate bathing/showering facilities in each section. Prisoners in Bruce collect their meal from a servery and dine together in one of the wing association rooms. All cells have EPIC and a sink. Once the refurbishment programme is complete each cell will have a new worktop and wardrobe. Once it has been refitted, Bruce will be in a position to provide decent, fit for purpose accommodation for 56 prisoners in single cells.

2.17 When prisoners are being moved from one block to another their personal possessions are transported in a 'wheelie bin'. It was disconcerting to see a prisoner's belongings being transported in what is usually a receptacle for rubbish. Although no prisoner raised this as an issue, the establishment should review the appropriateness of using wheelie bins to transport prisoners' personal belongings.

Peebles House

2.18 Peebles House is similar in design to Bruce, with two significant differences. It does not have CCTV and the prisoners have a key to their cell door. These differences reflect the fact that Peebles used to be Cornton Vale's 'top end'. Peebles also houses the Mother and Baby Unit within one of its units. The establishment tries to cap the population in Peebles at 61. On the first day of inspection 58 women were living there.

2.19 Dining/recreation facilities have been converted into activity rooms. In itself this is not a bad thing. However, it has led to prisoners not being able to dine in association or have a place just to sit and chat during association periods. The hall has three telephones, two downstairs and one upstairs. The telephones have canopies. There are adequate bathing/showering facilities in each section.

2.20 The cells in Peebles were the first to be refurbished three to four years ago. The cells are still in a good condition, and the hall was clean and tidy. Outside exercise is taken in an area around a pond adjacent to the block.

2.21 Staff and prisoners in Peebles did not feel that there was now much difference between the regimes in Bruce and Peebles. However, the fact that prisoners have a key to their own door in Peebles is one very clear difference. This perception is not insignificant and it was apparent that it was at least in part to do with a lack of confidence and understanding Peebles staff had of how the prisoners were selected for the move to Peebles from Bruce. There are no inter-hall staff meetings or jointly run promotion boards. Staff in the residential units should understand the criteria used for prisoners being upgraded to Peebles from Bruce, and participate in the process.

Skye House

2.22 Skye House holds convicted and remand prisoners under the age of 21. It has 27 cells in four units on two floors. Three cells are larger and these cells have bunk beds. There is a sink and EPIC in each cell. Toilets are available on a night sanitation system. Skye also has “back cells” like Younger. These cells should be fitted with beds, EPIC and integral sanitation. The hall capacity is 30. On the first day of inspection 22 women were living there.

2.23 The hall is currently being refurbished. It is good to note that unit staff had been given the opportunity to input to the design of the new facilities. There are two telephones, one on each floor. The telephones have canopies. Prisoners in Skye dine together in one of the wing association rooms. They can play bingo and watch television and DVD’s during recreation. The rooms are clean, tidy and well appointed. There are adequate bathing/showering facilities in each section. Prisoners can exercise in the open air in an enclosed yard adjacent to the block.

Wallace House

2.24 Wallace House is the newest accommodation in Cornton Vale, having opened in summer 2005. It has 51 cells in three wings. There are two disabled cells. The other 49 cells are designed to take two prisoners. There is cell sharing in two of the wings. The third wing is designated as the ‘top end’. One of the benefits of being in the top end is that prisoners are in a cell on their own. With ‘top-end’ prisoners living in single cells, the wing can hold up to 84 prisoners. On the first day of inspection 74 women were living there.

2.25 Prisoners must be low or medium supervision status before they can be considered for Wallace, and only Wallace prisoners are assessed for the Independent Living Units. All prisoners in Wallace have a key to their own door and have freedom of movement within their own section during patrol periods. All cells have EPIC, a toilet and for the first time in a Scottish prison, a shower. This is an excellent development and significantly enhances the decency of the accommodation. Women spoke very highly of the quality of accommodation in Wallace.

2.26 The hall is on one level with the wings extending from a central concourse. There is a visit room adjacent to the central area. There is also an ironing room and a laundry, although these are not available during the long periods when prisoners are locked in their sections. One section has a disabled toilet. The facilities are modern, clean and bright. The standard of decoration and cleanliness is excellent.

2.27 The concourse doubles as the dining area and the recreation area. Prisoners collect their meals from a servery and can sit in a pleasant airy environment to eat communally in a canteen type facility. However, there is very little to do during recreation periods. Some board games and cards are available. Prisoners usually remain in their sections during recreation periods watching television or chatting with friends.

2.28 Each section has a push bar fire escape. Wallace prisoners have access to exercise in a grassy area adjacent to the hall. There are two telephones in the central area and one in each section. The section telephones stay on after “lock up” so prisoners can use the telephone during patrol periods. The telephones are switched off at 11.30pm, and the reasons for this should be examined. This access is in keeping with the enhanced status of the prisoners held in Wallace. The privacy of telephone conversations is helped because all telephones have full canopies.

The Independent Living Units

2.29 At the time of the last inspection the Independent Living Units (ILUs) had just opened. The accommodation consists of six semi-detached houses outside the secure perimeter of the prison. Each house accommodates up to four prisoners, giving the ILUs a capacity of 24 prisoners. On the first day of inspection there were 11 women living there.

2.30 To be eligible for the ILUs prisoners must be low supervision status and fit the criteria for home leaves and outside placements. The opportunity is available to convicted adult prisoners, and prisoners under the age of 21.

2.31 Each house has one twin and two single bedrooms. There is a payphone in each house. The prisoners are responsible for preparing their own meals and keeping themselves and the house clean and tidy. The cleanliness and standard of furnishing in the ILUs is excellent.

2.32 Prisoners believe they have been told to leave the front door unlocked when they are in the house during the day. This may be because they are not yet on a placement, have a day off or are unwell. It was observed during inspection that one prisoner was in the house because she was unwell. Inspectors walked in to the house and were concerned that any member of the public could have done the same. When they asked the prisoner why she had not locked the door she said that officers had told her not to. This could potentially be a threat to both the safety of the prisoner and the security of the house. The establishment should review this practice.

2.33 Prisoners in the ILU's have access to regular weekend home leaves. They can also go to the shops in Stirling, attend a local swimming pool or walk in the town or countryside. Some of the placements prisoners can attend are described elsewhere in this report. The Independent Living Units are an excellent facility for developing a sense of responsibility and for preparing prisoners for release.

3. CUSTODY AND GOOD ORDER

Security and Safety

3.1 There have been no escapes since the last inspection.

3.2 In the period 1 April 2005 to the week of inspection there had been two serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults. In the same period there had been 31 minor prisoner-on-prisoner assaults. There had been no serious prisoner-on-staff assaults and 13 minor prisoner-on-staff assaults. In the previous year, 2004-05, there was one serious prisoner-on-prisoner assault 12 minor prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, one serious prisoner-on-staff assault and nine minor prisoner-on-staff assaults. The most striking statistic here is the increase in minor prisoner-on-prisoner assaults between 2004-05 and 2005-06 (up from 12 to 31). It is recognised that there has been an increase in the population in Cornton Vale but nevertheless the reasons for this increase in minor assaults should be examined.

3.3 There was one death in custody (subject to FAI) and 65 instances of self-harm in 2004-05. In the year 2005-06 to date of inspection there were two deaths in custody (subject to FAI) and 58 instances of self-harm. The reduction in self-harms is welcomed and striking, particularly given that there were 130 instances in 2002-03.

Custody and Order

3.4 The Custody and Order Manager has line management responsibility for the Gate, ECR, Visits and Reception. He also oversees escorting arrangements, physical security, and operational readiness and intelligence management. Reception and visits are covered elsewhere in this report.

3.5 The current arrangements for escorts are having an unintended impact at Cornton Vale. In the past, the level of security applied was determined by a risk assessment and based on the prisoner's supervision level as determined by SPS security procedures. There was often the option for the prisoner to be escorted by a member of staff known to her. This was of significance when the reason for the escort was particularly sensitive, for example an intimate gynaecological examination or a children's hearing. There was scope under this arrangement for handcuffs to be removed completely. The current practice is that all prisoners being escorted are routinely "double-cuffed", i.e. hands are cuffed together as well

as a second pair of cuffs attaching the prisoner to the escorting officer. This level of security would normally be expected where the danger of escape is high. Not only is it now routinely applied to all escorts, but pregnant women have suffered the humiliating experience of being handcuffed to a custody officer throughout labour, almost to the point of childbirth. Sometimes male officers have been present. Male officers have also been present when prisoners attend an intimate gynaecological examination. Even without emphasising the abuse many of these women have suffered and the poor experience many have had in their relationships with men, any consideration of decency would question these escort practices.

It is recommended that SPS should ensure that women under escort are subject to the level of security appropriate to the risk they present and that they are treated with reasonable standards of personal dignity and humanity.

3.6 The closure of the Female Units in Inverness, Aberdeen and Dumfries at the time of inspection has led to all women from these areas now being located in Cornton Vale. This means that they must spend a significant amount of time in a vehicle when attending court. This should be reviewed.

3.7 Weekly Custody and Order meetings take place. All of the residential areas have representatives who attend. These meetings are minuted. Inspectors viewed minutes from recent meetings. The focus of the meetings is prisoner management systems, including intelligence gathering and downgrading policy. It also discusses individual cases. Action points are recorded and reviewed at forthcoming meetings. The minutes indicate that managers try to ensure that policies are applied consistently across the prison. They also discuss staff matters such as shortages and dress standards. This meeting fulfils a useful function that could be further enhanced if the discussions and outcomes were cascaded to all staff.

3.8 The ECR in Cornton Vale has become more and more cramped as new systems are introduced and more accommodation becomes available. There are plans to refurbish it in the near future. It remains functional.

3.9 Cornton Vale has a well organised Control and Restraint training system. PE staff provide the training and the levels of competence are above the necessary levels.

Prisoner Complaints Procedure

3.10 Prisoners have the complaints procedure explained to them by the Business Improvement Prisoner as part of their induction. Complaint forms are readily available in all of the residential units. The Business Improvement Manager organises and chairs the Internal Complaints Committees (ICC). ICC members have been identified and have received role specific training. This specialist group comprises residential officers and chaplains. The training includes a session with the Complaints Commissioner. ICC's take place weekly on a Tuesday. A room in the Links Centre is reserved for the purpose.

3.11 The prison does not maintain a local database of complaints and although there has been work undertaken in the past to ensure that complaints are entered onto PR2 this no longer happens. Prisoner complaints should be entered on the SPS prisoner records system.

3.12 The prison could not provide data on how many complaints have been submitted recently and what the different issues were. This would be useful management information. Copies are kept of CP2's, CP3's and the complaints which go to the ICC. A sample of these was inspected and the answers given were satisfactory and timescales were met. However, the establishment should introduce a more robust audit trail of prisoner complaints.

Prisoner Disciplinary System

3.13 An innovation at Cornton Vale is the range of options available after a prisoner is placed on report for a disciplinary offence. The offence can be dealt with by referring to what would be generally understood as the 'Orderly Room'. However, if the offence is drug related this can be referred to a 'Care Orderly Room' where a case conference type approach is taken and the outcome is generally an agreed action plan for the individual. If this plan is completed the original charge is dealt with at the lower end of the scale rather than an automatic disciplinary sanction. This approach is well used and becoming part of the culture of Cornton Vale. Use made of this approach is as follows:

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3.14 Where cases are referred for adjudication in the normal way, there is also an option to refer the individual(s) concerned to a restorative process, most commonly used where there

has been some form of conflict. In this, trained facilitators work through the issue with those concerned trying to agree an outcome which is then binding. Restorative Practices are described in more detail at paragraphs 8.13 – 8.15.

3.15 These options try as far as possible to remove the individual from formal disciplinary sanctions, concentrating on reaching workable solutions or outcomes. This is an area of innovation and **good practice**.

3.16 Adjudications are held in one central area and are conducted by all members of the management team although one manager has responsibility for most adjudications to ensure consistency. The room itself is reasonable for the purpose and the proceedings are consistent with established practice. The adjudications are conducted in a relaxed and relatively informal manner which gives those involved every opportunity to participate.

Night Duty

3.17 Cornton Vale has one manager and seven officers attached to night duty. Ross House is the only residential area in the establishment which has officers permanently on site: it is supervised by two officers at all times. Given the unpredictable and vulnerable nature of the population there, this is to be welcomed. Two officers are based in the ECR, two are on peripatetic patrol covering the other residential areas and one is located in the gate. It is the responsibility of the Night Duty Manager to deploy their staff as they judge the needs of the prison to be.

3.18 Night duty instructions are very good. They are updated regularly by staff and the Personal Performance Management System is used to do so. Officers are set objectives to review and update the instructions in their area.

3.19 Night Duty Managers keep a log of night shift events so that colleagues can review the previous week's events when taking up duty. This helps to maintain consistency. Records indicated that night duty staff have to call the Doctor approximately once a week. The Doctor often attends the prison in these circumstances or if appropriate will advise staff by the telephone.

3.20 Night Duty is well managed in Cornton Vale.

4. ADDICTIONS

The Scale of the Problem

4.1 When tested on admission, almost all women test positive for drugs.

Management and Policy

4.2 The Addictions/Programmes Manager has responsibility for the addictions team, programmes team and MDT unit. She also has responsibility for the service provided by Phoenix House, although the service is line managed externally. The Addictions/Programmes Manager reports to the Deputy Governor. While there is an addictions social worker, addiction nurses, and a doctor they are line managed separately, although the Addictions/Programme Manager has input to their work.

4.3 A number of multi-disciplinary groups meet to discuss specific aspects of addiction services. The Addictions/Programme Manager attends monthly social inclusion meetings which include all operational SPS managers and heads of additional services. This looks at a range of operational matters including contract reviews, budgets and information systems. They also attend the Local Rehabilitation and Care Group meeting which is held quarterly. This considers the strategic overview of services and decision-making as well as providing a monitoring service. Both of these meetings are chaired by the Deputy Governor.

4.4 The Addictions/Programmes Manager chairs the Local Addiction Co-ordination Group which meets monthly. Addiction services and social work are represented. This group considers the day-to-day management of addiction services. There is also a weekly Addictions Assessment Referral Group (AARG) which considers all prisoners serving over thirty-one days. This is chaired by the Addictions/Programmes Manager and includes representation from addictions, social work and health.

Addiction Services

4.5 An SPS addictions team delivers a range of substance use programmes, as well as providing caseload support where there is a requirement for additional support. However, the

programmes are not female prisoner specific and there are therefore gaps in areas such as pregnancy. As outlined in the SPS Core Plus Model, provision is not normally available to prisoners on remand or those serving less than 31 days.

4.6 The addictions team has also been responsible for developing an Addictions Support Unit. This is located within Peebles House which has seven cells for women trying to live a drug free life. Prisoners here have displayed high motivation to abstain, the philosophy being to create a non-use environment and culture using peer support. They have weekly group sessions with an addictions worker to discuss relevant matters.

4.7 Phoenix House are now contracted to deliver addictions services on behalf of the SPS. The majority of prisoners are seen on admission, or the next day, and a Common Addictions Assessment Recording Tool (CAART) is completed. This is presented to the AARG to decide which services should be provided. Phoenix House provides a harm reduction programme to all admissions. This covers issues that may not have been relevant to a prisoner before, but may apply during the time they are in prison. This is provided to remand and convicted prisoners. Following the decisions reached at the AARG, Phoenix House can provide cognitive skills and anger management programmes, one-to-one motivational interviewing (drug and alcohol use) and involvement with 'Open Secret'. There are also plans to develop smoking cessation programmes and to pilot complementary therapies.

4.8 Both the Phoenix House and SPS addiction teams report positive working relationships. There are changes involving transfer of responsibilities taking place at present, particularly in relation to the Throughcare Addiction Service (TAS). There is also a sense that positive relationships have been established with external services such as '218' and 'West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service'.

Addiction Treatment Process

4.9 All prisoners serving less than 31 days access the harm reduction programme and 'signpost to services' on admission. Where a substance misuse issue is identified for sentenced prisoners serving 31 days or more, a CAART is completed by Phoenix House. This is then taken to the Addiction Assessment Referral Group and decisions are made regarding the level of service input required. If it is agreed that the case is not live, and there are no significant issues, then it will be reviewed at the agreed time, although prisoners can

access the service at any time. Those who require ongoing treatment will have a care plan devised and worker allocated.

4.10 The purpose of the AARG is to ensure that the right service is put in place. It seems to work well, although it is unclear how it is decided whether the addictions worker or Phoenix House worker will be the prisoner's caseworker and that these roles will not be duplicated.

4.11 Prisoners spoken to said that access to addictions services within the prison was not to an acceptable standard. They felt there was a broad brush approach to de-toxification that was not suitable for everyone. The decision about whether one-to-one working is required is made by the AARG, but might not reflect the prisoner's wishes. The majority spoke of not receiving help and support when required and reported seeing a worker twice in six months or not seeing anyone at all, and only receiving a service after testing positive. All agreed that it took too long to access addictions staff/support but once it did happen it was positive and helpful. There was no waiting list for one-to-one working.

4.12 Both prisoners and staff highlighted a problem in getting local health services to respond to requests for the prescribing of methadone. In some instances it took a considerable time for a response, others do not respond. This is a considerable concern both within the prison in terms of stabilising prisoners, but also in planning for release. One prisoner indicated that she had been in prison for six months and had consistently requested a prescription without success. She is due to be released and has no doubt that she will use again. Others indicated they did not want to use drugs within prison, but if there was a significant delay in terms of methadone, or no prescription at all, they would resort to using again within the prison.

Links with the Community

4.13 As well as attending the groups highlighted above the Addictions/Programmes Manager has established links within the community. She attends the ADAT in Glasgow and liaises with colleagues within the SPS who attend other ADATs.

5. PRISONER MANAGEMENT

Reception

5.1 The Reception area has been extensively refurbished making it much more fit for purpose. Two communal holding areas face the reception desk and have full glass walls and doors at the front providing excellent visibility. There are three cubicles, although these are not routinely used except for searching. There is a WC, two changing cubicles and two showers. All admissions are offered a shower. There is also a staff shower although this is rarely used. The Reception is well supplied with storage areas for property and for clothing. All prisoner clothing is kept in storage bags and the racking system makes excellent use of the area. Personal clothing can be laundered, on request, in the reception. The area is very clean, and in particular the storerooms are free from odour.

5.2 Office facilities are generally good. The staff desk has a SPIN terminal as does the separate staff office where valuable property is stored and records kept. There is a separate and discreetly located office for admission interviews which means that personal conversations can be carried out confidentially. The nurse station is rather cluttered and is dominated by a washing machine. There is an excellent Health Centre and there seems to be no reason why medical interviews or assessments could not be carried out there prior to admissions going to the residential areas.

5.3 Notices and information for prisoners who do not have English as a first language were on display. There is a clear protocol for the use of the interpreter service and staff had experience of using this.

5.4 The atmosphere in the Reception is fairly relaxed. All prisoners are offered a hot drink and, if it is a meal time, a sandwich. Prisoners can spend two hours or more in the evening in reception because there is no consistent procedure for taking them to the residential areas. Depending on which staff are on duty they may be taken to the hall by staff returning from their meal break. When in the hall they will get a hot meal. Other staff wait until the meals are served and medication issued before collecting admissions, who then miss a hot meal, potentially the only one of the day. This anomaly should be addressed.

5.5 Concerns were raised that since Cornton Vale has staff available earlier in the day than some other prisons, women are collected earlier than is necessary in order to suit the Contractor's escort schedule. They therefore spend longer in transit than is necessary. It was also indicated that there is little evidence of a regular flow of admissions from the courts and that women tended to be delivered after drop-offs at other prisons. **It is recommended that SPS and the Escort Contractor should review the scheduling of escorts.**

Induction

5.6 Induction is well organised and considerable effort is made to ensure that prisoners receive information and assistance appropriate to their need. Extensive use is made of a series of checklists which ensure that key areas have been covered and that induction has taken place.

5.7 A First Night Checklist covers 14 elements to ensure that immediate needs have been explained or met. This is also used with "turnarounds": i.e. prisoners who will have been escorted to Cornton Vale from anywhere in Scotland and who, due to the manner in which warrants are interpreted, will require to go through the full admission process. Once they have done so, they are required to be released and so go through the liberation process. The individual may have been brought hundreds of miles by escort staff, and are now required to make their own way home. In the month prior to the inspection, seven such prisoners were arrested, escorted to Cornton Vale and then immediately liberated. In the same period 14 women were admitted and released the next day (i.e. in less than 24 hours). This also happens in other local prisons, but, as the only female prison, Cornton Vale faces different issues in terms of length of journeys. It is hard to see how such a system, over which the SPS has no control, serves any useful purpose. **It is recommended that SPS engage with criminal justice partners to review the need to escort prisoners to Cornton Vale when there will be no sentence to serve.**

5.8 The induction process is conducted in the Links Centre which is a very relaxed and well-appointed area. On the day after admission, the First Night Form is reviewed, prisoners see the doctor and are provided with an orientation tour. On day two, Module 1 is delivered to all prisoners, whether untried or convicted. This follows the national SPS model and includes harm reduction; education assessment; benefits information; and employment

information. The Core Screening Instrument is also completed for all prisoners. ‘Peer Group Prisoners’ assist in delivering elements of the induction programme including input from Listeners based in the Links Centre, and the Business Improvement prisoner who delivers a session on the complaints procedure.

5.9 Module 2 is delivered weekly and is for women serving 31 days or more. It covers in more depth issues around family contact, bullying and the disciplinary procedure.

5.10 Module 3 consists of one weeks training and orientation and includes First Aid; Gym Induction; and Health and Safety. Employment is allocated during this week. Anyone serving over six months is automatically interviewed by the staff who deliver the programme.

5.11 The structure is sound and there is monitoring built in. Prisoners also sign a checklist to confirm that they have attended. Induction follows good SPS practice by having those individuals and agencies who deal with specialist areas provide their contributions directly. One exception is the learning centre who appear to have the ALERT educational assessment carried out by staff on their behalf. There is an opportunity during induction to establish contact with potential learners and promote what is on offer.

Sentence Management

5.12 The SPS Core Screening Instrument is completed during induction with all convicted prisoners, (untried prisoners have an individual induction checklist). The Core Screening Instrument is passed to Sentence Management where the co-ordinator enters all information on the Prisoner Records System and from the referrals generated, creates a Community Integration Plan (CIP). This links the individual to the range of agencies and interventions available in the prison. A particular challenge for Cornton Vale is its status as a national prison for women, requiring links to be made throughout Scotland.

5.13 A CIP is generated for all prisoners to ensure that key needs are identified and met at an appropriate level. For women serving very short sentences this may only cover immediate health and social needs; however the system tries to be as inclusive as possible. A First Line Manager carries out regular sample checks of folders. These are well maintained and the co-ordination of this area is impressive.

5.14 Sixty five long-term prisoners including 17 life sentence prisoners were subject to the formal SPS Sentence Management Scheme at the time of inspection. This is well run and Cornton Vale meets its targets in respect of Sentence Management. The establishment has 18 Risk and Needs Assessment trained officers of whom about eight are engaged in these duties at any one time. The introduction of Integrated Case Management (ICM) will be a challenge to staff who are uncomfortable with the Personal Officer role, since it puts the facilitative role of the Personal Officer at the centre of the process.

5.15 Key to prisoner management at Cornton Vale is the Local Risk Management Group (LRMG) which meets fortnightly. This is a multi-disciplinary group chaired by the Deputy Governor. It has a case conference role and deals with any significant changes to prisoners' circumstances, including security, progression, community access and movement to the Independent Living Units. Inspectors took the opportunity to attend a Group meeting without prior notice. The discussion of individuals was well prepared and conclusions reached were fair and balanced. Although no prisoner attended the meeting which was observed, life sentence prisoners do attend when their cases are being reviewed. This seems to be a very good principle which could be extended in the first instance to other long-term prisoners.

Throughcare

5.16 The establishment maintains a good database of service providers nationally. It is well served by a range of agencies including: Benefits Agency, Jobcentreplus, local councils, addiction services, and a range of voluntary agencies.

5.17 Central to throughcare is the use of the SPS Core Screening Instrument which acts as a referral to the various service providers internally and to those external agencies that attend or link with the prison. For long-term prisoners the Sentence Management Scheme is described at paragraphs 5.12-5.15. As Cornton Vale takes women from all over Scotland some problems arise in respect of the time it takes workers from some agencies to get to and from the prison. It was indicated by staff that there is some reluctance from workers to give up a day to meet one client in the prison. If this happens those women do not receive one-to-one interviews when this would be expected to be the norm.

5.18 Given its national role, and given the difficulty some agencies have in attending the prison, there may be an opportunity to examine the possibility of using the SPS videolink network to facilitate face to face interviews by key workers from local prisons to Cornton Vale.

Pre-Release

5.19 The Core Screening Instrument and CIP should cover issues identified for prisoners prior to release. The pre-release process at Cornton Vale consists of checking the core screen assessment and then interviewing those about to be released to ensure that links have been made. This is a fairly basic procedure, for example giving lists of telephone numbers. There seemed to be no use made of the CIP nor was any link to it identified. The system is thorough in identifying those about to be released but does not seem to engage beyond the superficial.

5.20 Given how well organised other aspects of prisoner management are, there appears to be scope to develop a range of pre-release programmes, particularly around personal and family management issues. **It is recommended that a more structured approach to pre-release is developed.**

Community Placements

5.21 Eleven prisoners were taking part in community placements at the time of the inspection. They all live in the Independent Living Units. The placements form an important part of preparation for release: prisoners have to take responsibility for their own behaviour; their own attendance; their own performance of their duties; their own travel; and their own timekeeping. The range of opportunities include hotel work, charity shops and industrial cleaning.

5.22 It would be difficult to hear more positive accounts of the experience than those given by placement supervisors during the inspection. They were very enthusiastic about the contribution made by prisoners. They were enthusiastic about the work carried out, and about the attitude and manner of the prisoners. Shortly before the inspection one placement had been terminated because of an incident involving the prisoner which was not related to

the placement: instead of being disheartened by this, the supervisor was exploring the possibility of replacing her with two prisoners! Two placement supervisors referred to improvements being introduced into the workplace by prisoners who had acquired particular skills within prison.

5.23 The prisoner who was interviewed on placement was in no doubt about the importance of the opportunity in her preparation for release: the development of self-confidence, the interaction with members of the public and the experience of being trusted had been very significant for her. The community placement scheme is an area of **good practice**.

6. HEALTHCARE

Background

6.1 Addictions and mental health issues are major challenges for the establishment, with the vast majority of prisoners having an addiction or mental health problem or both.

6.2 The Head of Care has been in the post for ten years and is part of the senior management team, which is unusual but beneficial. She also takes on duty governor responsibilities, covering physical health, mental health and chaplaincy. With the prevalence of addictions and mental health problems, healthcare has a high profile in the establishment.

6.3 Cornton Vale has one full-time doctor and two clinical nurse managers – one for mental health and the other for general health. There are 16.4 WTE nurses, one full-time administrator, one full-time pharmacy assistant and a 0.5 administration assistant. The team includes three mental health nurses and three addiction nurses. All undertake core duties of care. No allied health professionals are currently employed. A podiatrist visits the establishment and waiting times are similar to those in the community. There was previously one part-time occupational therapist but it has been difficult to recruit a replacement. All other allied health professional input is provided through referral to local NHS hospitals.

6.4 Audits have been carried out on a regular basis covering environmental standards through to communication with patients. Medication prescribing and administration are also audited.

Health Provision

6.5 All new admissions are seen by a nurse and referred to the doctor to be seen within 24 hours. Due to the high levels of referral to the clinic on a day-to-day basis, a nurse triage clinic was introduced in January 2006. This acts as a conduit to ensure that ill patients are seen by the doctor. On average the doctor sees 25 patients per day. The previous practice of a nurse being present during doctor/patient consultations has been changed to allow one-to-one consultations.

6.6 Administration and storage rooms are located on the first floor of the health centre, where there are four rooms dedicated to containing health records. Storage units for these records are awaited. The ground floor has several rooms for individual consultations. The dispensary, waiting room and several treatment rooms are also located here. The treatment rooms are clean, with adequate hand washing and drying facilities.

6.7 There are several nurse-led clinics, including asthma, dermatology, diabetes, cardiovascular and epilepsy clinics. These clinics are trying to address the chronic illnesses presented, and parallel changes in GP Practices where nurse-led clinics are being set up for these conditions. There is also a successful well woman clinic, for which there is much demand. The clinic has had 600 requests and dealt with 478 so far. There is one full-time mental health nurse on duty from 0900 to 1700 hours weekdays in Ross House. There is also a doctor's surgery and a 'sensory room' in Ross House. This is used to promote relaxation and de-stress vulnerable prisoners. There is a monthly 'drop-in centre' for prisoners, although take up is low.

Medication

6.8 There are 67 patients receiving methadone. Half of the women in the establishment self-medicate, with locked cabinets located in Wallace House. This appears to be working well: audits suggest that the facility is rarely abused. Spot checks are carried out regularly to monitor compliance.

6.9 Supervised medication is carried out daily and when patients fail to attend, this is followed up and monitored.

6.10 Alliance Pharmacy provides a standardised core service to all prisons in Scotland, and a pharmacist from Alliance attends Cornton Vale once a week. A pharmacy needs assessment has been carried out to identify gaps in the service and how to fill these gaps. Alliance works very closely with the nursing staff and carries out regular audits. There have been two or three drug errors/near-misses in the last six months, with one significant error in methadone dispensing. Policy changes were made as a result.

Medical Services

6.11 The doctor is full-time (nine sessions) within the prison. He is the Medacs lead doctor and has an interest in addictions but also integrates well into the mental health team and is part of the risk management team. He carries out in-service training once per month for care staff including prison officers. He also audits the triage clinic, and he personally has not had many complaints from the prisoners about the service provided. The doctor would like to see more mental health resources due to the high percentage of prisoners with mental health problems.

Mental Health

6.12 Psychiatry input is provided by Forth Valley Health Board and the State Hospital Board for Scotland, with two psychiatrists providing three sessions per week. One psychiatrist covers remand prisoners and the other covers convicted prisoners.

6.13 The multi-disciplinary mental health team is well established and meets once a week. Approximately 90% of prisoners are assessed by a mental health nurse on admission which ensures that the team have a good grasp of prisoners' mental health problems. The referral system is open and responsive.

6.14 Statistics show that instances of self-harm have dropped over the past year: down from 65 last year to 58 this year. Indeed they have more than halved since 2002-03 (see paragraph 3.3).

6.15 Cornton Vale is unique in that almost all prisoners tested on admission indicated that they had taken an illicit drug. It is estimated 80% have mental health problems. The ethos of the prison is to try to move to a caring/supportive environment.

6.16 Overall, mental health provision within the prison is well established and is good. At the time of inspection 10 prisoners were subject to ACT procedures. ACT is very well managed with strong links between healthcare staff and prison officers. One prisoner told inspectors "I would not be here today were it not for ACT. They saved my life."

Dental

6.17 A part-time dentist is employed by Cornton Vale, who spends four hours a fortnight at the prison. This is inadequate considering the extremely poor dental health of the prison population. However it is noted that the Head of Care has written to every dental practice in the Forth Valley region requesting help.

6.18 The equipment is presently being upgraded within the dental clinic. As the dentist only visits once a fortnight, emergency care is an issue for both the prison staff and the prisoners. Many remarked on waiting up to a fortnight with severe toothache, abscesses and broken teeth. This is not satisfactory, however efforts are being made to address the problem. There was little evidence of health promotion for oral health.

7. LEARNING, SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Introduction

7.1 In March 2005, Lauder College was awarded the SPS contract for the provision of learning, skills and employability in Cornton Vale. Following a period of transition to facilitate the changeover from the previous provider, Lauder College appointed a learning centre co-ordinator who took up post at the end of June 2005.

Staffing and Resources

7.2 The Learning Centre Co-ordinator is suitably qualified and experienced in working with prisoners. She has successfully introduced a number of courses and is committed to providing high quality and relevant learning experiences. All of the team of part-time tutors are suitably qualified or experienced and the majority have, or are currently working towards, an appropriate teaching qualification. As a result of the timetable arrangements involving so many part-time tutors, it is difficult for the co-ordinator to arrange effective team meetings.

7.3 Officers in charge of most work parties are suitably experienced, but long-term absence of staff in the laundry work party has adversely affected the learning opportunities for prisoners in this party. There is insufficient liaison among SPS work party officers, learning centre staff and the prison library staff to enhance and support prisoners' learning opportunities.

7.4 Accommodation for learning centre activities is limited by the number and size of rooms. There are two good-sized rooms within the central block. One room serves as a multi-purpose teaching space and the other is a computer suite. The computer suite is adequately equipped with ten computers. The other available space is situated within one of the accommodation blocks close to the cells. It includes a tutorial room and a small, poorly laid-out kitchen. The kitchen does not meet the standards expected of a teaching kitchen and presents potential health and safety risks for those participating in lessons. No risk assessment has been carried out in respect of the kitchen accommodation. This should be addressed.

7.5 A new and attractive library facility opened during the week of the inspection. It will be supported by Stirling Council as part of its library services. The narrow range of books did not include an adequate supply of works of non-fiction. There is little involvement of prisoners or learning centre staff in the choice of books and magazines acquired by the library. In the past few months, prisoners have been unable to access a library service. In the accommodation blocks, the provision of books and magazines to promote literacy, and for leisure purposes is poor.

Access to Learning, Skills and Employability

7.6 Prisoners have access to a limited range of learning activities within the Learning Centre. They can undertake accredited courses in communication, numeracy, mathematics and computing. Due to the lack of suitable accommodation, prisoners have no access to art courses and restricted opportunities to take part in cookery classes. Seventeen prisoners are accessing open learning opportunities through Telford College and six are undertaking studies leading to awards at Higher National levels. Good attempts are being made to increase the range of learning opportunities for all prisoners. Three classes have been introduced for remand prisoners and there is an appropriate focus on encouraging young adults to take part in learning: this is an encouraging development. Recently, some prisoners have taken part in a number of well-designed short courses aimed at promoting literacy skills. Around 45% of prisoners have taken part in educational activities. There is no systematically planned educational provision, and only a narrow range of other activities, suitable for prisoners with significant learning difficulties.

7.7 The prison provides work parties in laundry, industrial cleaning, gardening, catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy. There are very good opportunities for prisoners to gain recognised qualifications in industrial cleaning, in hairdressing and in beauty therapy. Although the establishment cannot provide sufficient work party places for all convicted prisoners, it provides a range of activities in accommodation blocks to allow prisoners to develop a range of skills. Of particular note in this area is the Young Enterprise project involving seven prisoners (“Destiny’s Design”) in the production and sale of decorative boxes based on a business plan developed by the Destiny’s Design team. This is a very positive development and one which is valued by the participants. In a letter to the Inspectorate the team wrote ... “what we have gained so far is quite amazing ... We never imagined we could have come so far and we have, as a group, a team, individually, all joined

in and worked hard to make this go the way we want ... We know we are the first female prisoners in the UK to be given this opportunity and we want to make it work not just for ourselves but future girls.” The “Destiny’s Design” initiative is an area of **good practice**.

7.8 Prisoners in the Independent Living Units have excellent opportunities to engage in a wide range of outside work placements with a number of employers. These employers participate very willingly in these arrangements and a number of prisoners have progressed on liberation to permanent employment with their placements.

7.9 All prisoners are informed at their induction about the classes on offer. The learning provider uses attractive posters, displayed in all of the accommodation blocks, to publicise courses. In addition, the learning centre co-ordinator has developed a range of clear and well-presented leaflets to provide helpful information to prisoners on available learning opportunities. However, the range of courses in core skills does not meet fully the needs of all prisoners.

Assessment of Need

7.10 As part of their induction programme, prisoners complete an ‘Alerting Tool’ which helps to highlight where they may benefit from help with reading, writing and number skills. In some cases, this is followed up by another assessment to determine the most suitable classes. Before beginning classes, each prisoner meets with the learning centre co-ordinator to discuss her previous achievements and to agree a personal learning programme. However, the arrangements for identifying the skill levels and abilities of individual learners do not address specific barriers to learning such as dyslexia or missed schooling.

7.11 On the whole, prisoners find places on work parties that suit their preferences and prior experience. There is a significant delay for a few prisoners in accessing education opportunities after they have identified their needs to the learning centre.

Delivery of Learning

7.12 Overall, staff interact well with prisoners. They are sensitive to their needs and use a range of suitable approaches to encourage and support learning. In most cases, course materials are well designed and attractive.

7.13 In most core skills classes, learners have opportunities to work at a range of levels that provide suitable pace and challenge. Within the range of courses offered, there is appropriate opportunity for learners to access support in class on an individual and group setting. At the time of inspection, it was too early to evaluate the benefit to learners of the recently reopened library.

7.14 The delivery of learning activities in work parties is highly structured and provides effective opportunities for the development of skills in a wide range of vocational areas. But the prison and the learning centre miss opportunities to integrate core skills, vocational training and preparation for employment into a holistic learning experience for prisoners.

Prisoners' Learning Experiences

7.15 The learning centre co-ordinator and tutors have developed a welcoming and supportive learning environment. Prisoners speak very positively about the quality of their learning experiences and the support provided by tutors. Most are well motivated and are making good progress in their current studies. They appreciate the relevance of their studies to life beyond prison and those attending the learning centre are developing a range of skills and attitudes in addition to those specified in their units of study. These include working together, life skills, motivation to learn and growing confidence. In two of the accommodation blocks, there is no provision for the range of activities available in the other blocks. A system of peer tutoring had been implemented but was under review at the time of inspection.

7.16 Prisoners in the cleaning work parties demonstrate high levels of independence in their work in accommodation blocks. They carry out their own monitoring of performance and put in place remedial measures where appropriate. This is an area of **good practice**.

Achievement

7.17 A number of prisoners have been successful in achieving qualifications in such areas as first aid, manual handling, food hygiene and health and safety. In addition, there is good attainment in hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes. Overall, data indicates a good level of qualifications being gained.

7.18 Prisoners speak very positively, and with confidence, about their personal achievements. Award ceremonies for successful learners are valuable in celebrating achievement. A few courses, such as creative writing for children, develop good writing skills in those participating and the products of their activities are of high quality. However, there are no extension activities or next steps to allow prisoners to build on their new skills. Opportunities are missed to provide certification in housekeeping and the laundry.

Ethos and Values

7.19 Overall, relationships between staff and prisoners are positive. Prisoners work co-operatively with tutors and with each other. There is a relaxed and purposeful atmosphere in classes. The learning centre recognises the importance of prisoners' educational achievements. The two awards events that it has arranged have enabled family and friends to celebrate prisoners' successes.

Quality Assurance

7.20 Learning centre staff monitor the numbers of prisoners attending courses and activities. However, there are no systematic approaches to evaluating the quality of provision in the learning centre. There is no evaluation by prison staff of the effectiveness of work parties but prisoners on the industrial cleaning party carry out effective self-evaluation of their activities and implement improvements to meet service standards. Elsewhere, there is no identification or implementation of actions to improve services for learners.

Conclusion

7.21 There is a wide range of commendable learning, skills and employability activities offered to prisoners but this range does not always meet the needs of prisoners who have difficulties with basic skills. Learning centre staff and work party officers have formed good relationships with prisoners. Much effective learning takes place. This includes innovative activities for prisoners and opportunities to gain certification through work party learning. However, there is not enough shared planning of the full range of learning opportunities open to prisoners.

8. CARE

Family Contact

8.1 Arrangements for maintaining family contact are good. There are three dedicated Family Contact Development Officers (FCDO) in place. They carry out a range of duties within the establishment and also liaise with community based, family orientated, organisations such as Families Outside, Children First, Aberlour and Barnardos.

8.2 An information pack is sent to the families of prisoners shortly after reception. This provides details of visiting times, how to get to the prison, issues relating to property and money, information about the Assisted Prison Visit Scheme and other general information. Information is available in different languages. As part of this pack, family members are invited to attend an informal meeting within the establishment. This meeting is an opportunity to meet with staff and obtain further information. This is an area of **good practice**.

8.3 In addition to the routine visit entitlement in the main visit room, Wallace House has its own visit facilities. ‘Access Visits’ are available on Tuesday and Thursday mornings: these are for children being supervised by social services. These visits take place in the main visits room and are attended by a community-based social worker. Mother and child visits take place in the Family Centre (“Little Cherubs”), which provides a very good environment for these types of visits. Family Group Conferencing is available as part of the assessment for Home Leaves.

8.4 Visit times are fairly flexible and if the room is not full, times can be extended. Similarly if visitors arrive late it is usually possible to have the visit – although this is more difficult if the visit is in Wallace where visitors have to be escorted to the houseblock.

8.5 Despite all of these positive approaches, the main visits room itself is small with few facilities. There is no shop, only a vending machine in the visits room and no tea or coffee facility in the waiting room. **It is recommended that the facilities in the main visits room are improved.**

8.6 Privileged mail is given to prisoners unopened.

Mother and Baby Issues

8.7 A policy document exists for the Mother and Baby Unit which outlines the processes and relevant people involved. Previous inspections reported that this policy needs to be updated. This still requires to be done as a matter of urgency. The current policy outlines health and safety requirements of babies using a risk assessment, but is unclear what this risk assessment is. It also needs to have a clearer emphasis on child protection responsibilities for staff, and cover in more detail the strategy for separation, bearing in mind how crucial this component is for future relationships.

8.8 The unit itself has seven rooms for mothers and babies. At the time of inspection it housed two pregnant prisoners and one woman who had recently had her baby. The other cells were occupied by other prisoners. Staff and prisoners spoken to confirmed that this was a fairly regular occurrence: that there were often prisoners who were not pregnant accommodated in the unit due to a lack of space elsewhere. Pregnant women and mothers spoken to said that they generally had no problem with this, but it could be noisy and they would prefer a quieter environment.

8.9 The current policy requires that staff are appropriately trained to meet the standards of care needed. Two staff have had some training in drugs and pregnancy and have taken a short mother and baby course. Staff stressed that clearer guidance in terms of training would be useful.

8.10 The inspectorate spoke to one of the pregnant prisoners and the other who had recently had her baby. They were of the view that the Unit should only be accessible to those who are pregnant. They also expressed concern about a perceived lack of consistency in the midwifery service they received. They were often seen by different midwives and therefore had to repeat information, and found it more difficult to form a relationship.

8.11 Much concern was expressed, at different levels, about the treatment of prisoners during transport to and from hospital, supervision within the hospital, and during labour. The main concern identified was that the two most recent women giving birth in Stirling Royal were double-cuffed throughout the escort and the cuffs were only removed for half an hour at

the point of delivery. One of these women had a caesarean section and the cuffs were only taken off at the operating theatre.

8.12 There have also been complaints from visitors and staff regarding the handcuffing of the women attending outpatient appointments, to the point where some women are refusing to go for appointments. Many women complain that during intimate procedures, Reliance staff remain in the room. This has led to several patients complaining about a loss of dignity and privacy. Issues surrounding the escorting of mentally ill patients have also been identified, with instances of patients injuring themselves in the transfer. Nursing staff are now unable to accompany these severely distressed women.

8.13 It is recommended that the routine practice of cuffing and double-cuffing women under escort to hospital, during intimate examinations and during labour is stopped.

Restorative Practices

8.14 Restorative Practices are a way to help resolve problems, arguments, bullying and fights without immediate recourse to a disciplinary sanction. Referrals can be made through the Orderly Room if it is deemed appropriate. It looks at the facts of what has happened, the consequences in terms of harm and how to stop it happening again in the future. The process is about more than saying sorry: outcomes are required including an action plan. The establishment is working with a number of agencies and is developing networks to take this work forward.

8.15 The approach of restorative practices is one part of the establishment's care approach to prisoners and their problems. While it does not replace the custody and good order requirements of the establishment it adds another dimension to the culture now being embedded. The importance of the approach has been recognised through an Award from the Butler Trust to the member of staff who has been developing this over the past three years.

8.16 An Inspector was able to sit in on a Restorative Practice session. The proceedings were well organised and it was apparent that the relaxed nature of the session helped the two prisoners participate fully without it being overly stressful. The officers facilitating were very professional and able to conduct matters in an appropriate way, meeting the needs of both participants. At the end of the session both prisoners were satisfied with the conclusion reached and had a greater understanding of the impact of their actions upon each other.

Physical Education

8.17 In the last year there has been an increase from two to three full time PE Instructors. The additional PEI has made a significant difference to access time for prisoners. In February 2005 before the third PEI was in place there were 606 prisoner development hours in the gym. In February 2006 there were 854 hours. The PEIs are assisted by two residential officers who help out in the evenings and at weekends when required. They have a Sports and Games qualification.

8.18 Gym facilities are fairly basic in that they consist of one gym with a stage. The floor space is used for games and the stage is used for cardiovascular work. There is a range of equipment available for prisoners' use kept on the stage. The showers and changing rooms are old but functional. They were clean and tidy during inspection.

8.19 In summer 2005 PE staff surveyed prisoners on the activities they would like to see given highest priority in the gym. The timetable was changed to accommodate these preferences.

8.20 The establishment runs a timetable from 07.30 to 20.00 hours Monday to Friday and 10.30 to 16.30 at the weekend. This timetable provides access for prisoners from all residential units. It also has time set aside for induction sessions, health assessments and health promotion. Staff can use the facilities three lunch times per week.

8.21 The time set aside for prisoners from Wallace House is 07.30 to 08.30 hours each weekday. Given that these are prisoners who have progressed the most it seems a bit unfair that they can only access the gym at that time of day, albeit they can attend every day. Several Wallace prisoners expressed their dismay at only being able to go to the gym early in the morning. The establishment should examine ways of spreading the recreational time available to prisoners in the gym in a more equitable way.

8.22 Health assessments make use of technology to assess prisoners' fitness levels and this helps PE staff to create personal exercise programmes. More generic health promotion information is also available to PE staff. There are no external facilities so activity is restricted to the gym. The size of the gym makes it impossible to have more than 18

exercising at any one time. This may have been sufficient when the prison was first built but is inadequate for the 300 plus prisoners the prison now has to manage.

8.23 Opportunities to gain qualifications in the gym are very limited. First Aid training has taken place in the past for prisoners and staff. When an interested prisoner is in the prison PEIs can arrange British Amateur Weight Lifting Association training. Preparations are underway to allow younger prisoners to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme. The prison has also run smoking cessation courses with limited success. PE staff work with health professionals to arrange a healthy eating day every year, as well as running well women clinics and stress awareness sessions. They have also participated in a mental health awareness day.

8.24 In order to meet more successfully the educational and recreational needs of prisoners Cornton Vale needs better facilities for physical education.

Social Work

8.25 The Social Work Team is fully-staffed at present, and includes a Team Leader (job share), two senior social workers, three social workers and an administrator. The team is managed by Stirling Council Criminal Justice Services. The social work team, although generic, has areas of particular practice based on the skills mix. This includes each worker holding a caseload of statutory work, and additionally specialising in addictions, mental health and child protection.

8.26 The social worker (addictions) links with the addictions team and Phoenix House and has some involvement in delivering programmes (Lifeline, Drug Action for Change and Alcohol Programme). The social worker who is a mental health officer links with Ross House where vulnerable women live. This used to be done on a duty basis (ie by appointment), but now visits are daily. The hall contacts social work to advise of admissions and concerns. The social worker who links with the Mother and Baby Unit and the Independent Living Units deals with applications for these; child protection matters; and Schedule One offenders. They also link with external services to co-ordinate the care, welfare and protection of children.

8.27 Although social work has a clear role in relation to statutory work, involvement with prisoners who have the option of voluntary aftercare is less clear. Social work state that the majority of short-term prisoners bypass them, and they have very little contact unless there is a specific request. All young offenders are interviewed through the duty system. Social work within the prison would then automatically write to the relevant local authority to bring to their attention the young person's imprisonment and any other issues they felt were relevant.

8.28 Overall, the social work team is well integrated in Cornton Vale and has established positive working relationships. They are located within an area of the prison which is occupied by other key services they work with, and this adds to the good integration of the service. The current accommodation is being refurbished.

Psychology

8.29 The psychology department comprises one Senior and two psychologists. A further member of staff has been seconded to the department for a period of two years to develop a female offender specific programme. The psychologists split their time between Cornton Vale and Polmont. Each of the three psychologists attends Cornton Vale one day per week. The remaining time is spent in Polmont. This arrangement was put in place in January 2005 when the management responsibility for psychologists moved from Headquarters to establishments. This effectively reduced psychology intervention at Cornton Vale from nine days per week to three. Whatever the criteria for this decision, **it is recommended that a full assessment is made of needs within Cornton Vale which might be met by psychology and whether current psychology provision can meet this.**

8.30 The average current breakdown of work is as follows:

	Number of hours per week
Risk Assessments	8
Programmes – Lifeline/Anger Management	4
Research and Development/Consultancy	4
Line Management/Supervision/Admin	2.5
Integrated Case Management	2
Mental Health	2
Total	22.5

8.31 The Mental Health Nurse delivers a further two days a week dedicated to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

8.32 There did not appear to be as many referrals to the psychologists as there had been in the past, but this might be partly because people do not expect to be seen. However, the main areas of need tend to be related to addiction, relationships, and general mental health issues (including anxiety, depression and personality disorders). It is good that a female specific programme is being developed, although this will not be up and running for around two years.

8.33 The team feels well integrated into the establishment despite the reduced time spent there. They are satisfied that staff understand their role, and are flexible in helping them carry out that role. They are involved in a wide range of meetings and case conferences.

Programmes

8.34 Four Officers and one First Line Manager deliver the following programmes:

Cognitive Skills	Accredited
Anger Management	Non Accredited
Lifeline (Drug Relapse Prevention)	Approved
Drug Action for Change	Approved
Alcohol Awareness	Approved
Connections (Relationship based)	Approved
Anxiety and Sleep	Approved

8.35 The Psychology Department are developing a female specific offending programme focusing on violence.

8.36 The establishment was recently awarded renewal of site accreditation and therefore has good accommodation in which to deliver the programmes.

8.37 The KPI target for delivery for 2005-06 is 4109 hours. This target had been exceeded at the time of inspection and projections indicated that around 5000 hours would be achieved in the year. However, the system of meeting KPIs might not always reflect a needs driven referral system. For example, the Anger Management Programme had not run because of a

difficulty in filling it with suitable candidates: not enough women met the strict criteria. Yet there is a long waiting list for 'Drug Action for Change': a demand which cannot be met because of staffing.

8.38 During February 2006 twelve referrals were made to programmes from Bruce House, ten from Peebles, six from Wallace and four from Skye.

8.39 Some uncertainty about how and what programmes would be required to be delivered in the future made planning difficult. This uncertainty revolved around the future of the Cognitive Skills programme, lack of numbers to fill Anger Management, and the training implications for these. SPS HQ needs to clarify the position in relation to programme requirements not just for Cornton Vale but for all establishments.

Race Relations

8.40 One Race Relations Manager and one Race Relations Officer (based in Bruce House) are in post. These roles are additional to other tasks. There is no formal Race Relations Monitoring Group in place. A Black and Ethnic Minority Group meeting is scheduled to take place every six weeks or so although this had not regularly happened in practice. No minutes are taken but all ethnic minority prisoners have the opportunity to take part. The Inspectorate attended one of these meetings which was poorly attended by prisoners. This group is a good initiative and efforts should be made to ensure that it continues.

8.41 At the time of inspection there were ten ethnic minority and three foreign national prisoners being held. There did not appear to be any major issues arising but the establishment should review its informal way of approaching issues. In particular, meetings should be minuted, a formal RRMG should be set up and a review should take place of whether a RRO should be allocated to each residential area.

8.42 The establishment has a detailed Race Relations Action Plan in place. This follows a Race Relations Audit in December 2005. It covers a range of issues – highlighted at a local level over time and including more recent requirements from SPS Headquarters. A review of actions are outlined, along with an accountable member of staff. A Race Relations Audit Tracker covering actions outwith the Action Plan is also in place. A recent Race Relations

‘Update’ Newsletter provided details of the new telephone translation service available to SPS and provided details of how to access the service. All staff received a copy of this information sheet.

8.43 Diets are catered for, and an area in the kitchen is set aside to prepare halal food. Special diets are rarely requested, and no one was receiving one at the time of inspection. Should a special diet be requested a tailored menu would be provided. The canteen stocks a number of products requested by ethnic minority prisoners: in particular shampoo, conditioner and hair gel. The canteen had run out of these items during the inspection. It is good that these items are provided, but consideration should be given to providing a wider range, and ensuring that they are always in stock.

8.44 Three formal complaints using the Confidential Racial Incident Report Form (CRIR) had been made in the past year. These were linked and had been dealt with appropriately.

Chaplaincy

8.45 Two chaplains are in post, providing a total of 37 hours per week to Cornton Vale:

Church of Scotland	21 hours	(Monday, Wednesday and Friday)
Roman Catholic	16 hours	(Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday)

8.46 A Roman Catholic Service takes place on a Sunday morning and this is very well attended (sometimes reaching over 80). The Church of Scotland Service was moved recently from a Sunday morning to a Wednesday afternoon. This is reasonably well attended (can reach 30). Both services are ecumenical in nature. Part of the Wednesday service is discussion based and for this reason officers are not present.

8.47 The chaplains are involved in a range of work across the establishment. One provides an input to young offender, ICC, and mental health issues. The other inputs to long-term prisoners, race relations and general family issues. Both are involved in induction on a daily basis and in one-to-one work if required. They attend a number of meetings within the establishment.

Youth Agenda

8.48 The establishment has a Youth Agenda in place. This aims to achieve the maximum amount of time spent out of cells in constructive activities. It tries to engage young adults in an interactive way that integrates activities, employment and learning programmes. It stresses the need for all staff who work in Skye House to display a positive role model approach towards the young adults being held there. This is an ongoing approach and the effects are being monitored in terms of levels of bullying, the atmosphere in Skye, the personal appearance of the young adults, and the cleanliness of the hall and rooms.

Visiting Committee Under 21

8.49 The Chair of the Visiting Committee indicated that he and the members believed that the Committee was well supported by the prison management and by the Governor.

8.50 The most significant factor in the lives of young adults in Cornton Vale, in the view of the Chairman of the Visiting Committee, was the unhappiness of the lives they had lived before coming into prison. For many of them when they were in Cornton Vale, the key issue was “what is happening to my family?”

8.51 Two matters had been giving considerable concern to the committee. One is their perception, supported by comments from many prisoners, that Young Offenders are spending an increasing amount time locked in their cells. The other is the amount of money spent on food. This sum has remained at £1.57 per day since 1996 (as everywhere in the SPS) a sum which was described by the Chairman of the Committee as “outrageous”.

8.52 The Committee had been extremely impressed by the project “Destiny’s Design”, developed under the Scottish Young Enterprise scheme.

Visiting Committee Over 21

8.53 The membership of the Committee has been changed in the past year: more members are now involved in the regular work of the Committee. The Chair of the Visiting Committee indicated that she and the members believed that the Committee was well supported by the prison management and by the Governor.

8.54 Developments at Cornton Vale which are felt by the Committee to be particularly beneficial to prisoners include the opening of Wallace House, the growth in Family Contact work (in particular the possibilities for better family contact for families living some distance from Stirling made possible by video-conferencing), and the introduction of the Strategy for Positive Relationships. Their experience, confirmed by what they were regularly told by prisoners, was that relationships between prisoners and most members of staff were excellent, (although a few members of staff adopted an intimidating and authoritarian style).

8.55 The Committee expressed some concern over certain matters. They believed that the number of prisoners being restrained by prison staff was increasing, that more prisoners were being kept locked in cell for longer times, and that Sunday worship might not be meeting the needs of all denominations.

9. SERVICES

Estates and Facilities

9.1 A major investment has been made in the construction of Wallace House. The programme of refurbishing the rest of the residential accommodation has continued in Bruce and Skye Houses.

9.2 The night sanitation system has been replaced, and along with the installation of CCTV, has considerably improved access during patrol shifts. The staff alarm system has also been replaced and work is ongoing with the installation of a fire detection system. Some very imaginative work has been carried out to create a library and expand the hairdressing facility.

9.3 The separate cells areas in Younger and Skye provide poor accommodation: they are stark and dark. In Skye, the roof shows considerable signs of water ingress. At a minimum, beds should be installed rather than the continued use of concrete plinths and mattresses. Toilets and EPIC should also be installed.

9.4 Overall, the estates function impresses as well organised and proactive.

Health and Safety

9.5 Cornton Vale shares a Health and Safety co-ordinator with Glenochil. He attends Glenochil three days per week and Cornton Vale two. He also has responsibility for Fire Safety in Cornton Vale.

9.6 Cornton Vale has been subject to two Health and Safety audits by the SPS Health and Safety Advisor in March and November 2005. The establishment was assessed as 91% compliant with SPS standards in the most recent audit. An action plan to address the gaps is currently being worked through.

9.7 Accident reporting is managed well. Each functional head has responsibility in their Service Level Agreement with the Governor to make sure all accident reports are submitted

on time. In order to encourage staff to report accidents or near misses a “hot line” has been set up by the Estates department. The accident book is held in the health centre. A member of staff in the health centre checks entries and is trained to identify when an accident investigation report is necessary. This system seems to work well.

9.8 A Health and Safety Management Plan has been created. This is the main impetus for meetings and action. It sets out clearly the priorities for the establishment and attaches a measure of success and an owner for each action. Health and Safety Committee meetings take place quarterly, chaired by the Governor.

9.9 The Health and Safety Coordinator provides written information for the monthly management report and meetings as required. Minutes of the most recent meetings were examined by inspectors. They were detailed and informative. Progress is monitored and minuted. Meetings are attended by a cross section of staff from the different functions. TUS partners also take a full part in the process.

9.10 Work is ongoing to review existing area risk assessments, and special attention is being given to the risk to staff and prisoners of passive smoke inhalation. Area managers are responsible for the risk assessments with support and guidance available from the Health and Safety Co-ordinator. This is an area of **good practice**.

9.11 Health and safety is well managed in Cornton Vale.

Human Resources and Staff Training

9.12 There are good communication systems in place. Human Resource (HR) related reports are detailed and user friendly and contribute to overall management meetings. A unique factor is the much higher level of part-time working and number of maternity leaves in Cornton Vale. The prison is more or less working at staff complement but there were concerns expressed that the number available for coping with maternity leaves did not match the actual uptake. This made covering posts difficult.

9.13 HR facilities are good. There is a relatively new meetings/training area, and although the rooms are not large they meet the needs of the establishment. The HR Manager and Staff

Training Manager have offices in this area. The building that was formerly a staff restaurant, adjacent to the car park outside the prison, is also used for training.

9.14 The last year has been one of significant change in HR and staff training. The prison redesigned its management structure and realigned the staff complement to fit this new structure. There were resultant changes to activities in different work areas and changes to staff job descriptions. This was sensitively managed and is now starting to show some benefits.

9.15 All of this coincided with a significant increase in the prisoner population which required an increase in staff to cope. Cornton Vale was able to recruit in such a way that those identified were selected on the basis of their suitability to work specifically with female offenders.

9.16 There is an imbalance in levels of competence in core training. Custody type training such as Control and Restraint and Speed Cuffing sit between 90% and 114% compliance. However, more care orientated core training is lower; ACT 2 is at 70%, first aid at 48% and emergency aid at 46%. This should be addressed.

9.17 Training is well organised and there is a link between the objectives of the prison and those of the individual. The establishment is also focusing on relationships as a key element of its development strategy. A “Strategy for Positive Relationships” is being created and staff training modules to support different elements of this are being developed.

9.18 Two other recent training initiatives have been in Restorative Justice and A1 Assessors. This training supports these innovative changes by giving staff the necessary skills to manage conflict, and to qualify the staff in activity areas to assess prisoners at work, so giving them the opportunity to gain qualifications. The establishment has retained Investor in People status.

Catering

9.19 Food is prepared in a kitchen in the centre of the prison. It is then transported in heated trolleys and served to prisoners in their residential blocks, from a servery, to be eaten

in association in the dining rooms or in cells. Transportation leads to a deterioration in the quality of the food. This was confirmed by inspectors who tasted the food.

9.20 The kitchen services the six residential units inside the establishment. Prisoners in the ILU's make their own food. The kitchen is well organised and functional. A recent Environmental Health Office inspection was very positive. During inspection it was clean, tidy and well organised. All storage areas, equipment and the general standard of decoration were good.

9.21 All religious, cultural and special dietary needs are met, although it is rare for a prisoner to ask to be treated differently from others. When it does happen the establishment tends to personalise the service rather than incorporate a special need into the standard menu.

9.22 All convicted prisoners submit their choice for each meal in advance. Untried prisoners are not offered the same level of service. In Ross and Younger a 'first come first served system' operates. The kitchen tries to predict what the most popular choice will be and put on more of that option. The hall staff rotate the order of who is served first. The system is managed as fairly as it can be but some prisoners are still left with a take it or leave it option. Untried prisoners should get the same service as convicted prisoners.

9.23 The menu operates on a four-week rotation. Each week has a theme and within each selection there is a vegan or vegetarian option. The options available give prisoners the opportunity to have a varied diet within the limitations of the budget, which remains at £1.57 per day.

9.24 All prisoners have the opportunity to dine in association. The cafeteria-style rooms in Wallace and Ross are especially good. Space is more limited in Younger, Bruce, Peebles and Skye. This is becoming more difficult to maintain as dining rooms in the halls are turned into activity areas. All cutlery and plates are washed in the hall servery area after every meal. There is appropriate equipment and materials in each wing to undertake this task. This means that prisoners can be confident that they are eating with clean utensils.

9.25 Training records are maintained for all prisoners who work in the kitchen. Catering Officers are in the process of acquiring A1 status so they can train prisoners to SVQ Level 2

standard. They already give prisoners the opportunity to achieve ‘Introduction to Food Hygiene’ and ‘Elementary Food Hygiene’ qualifications.

9.26 An internal food complaints system is in place, although complaints are rare (five in the last year). Prisoners can influence the system through “Healthy Eating” meetings facilitated by the Business Improvement Manager. The Catering Manager also attends these on occasion.

9.27 Fruit juice and drinking water are readily available in the halls. Almost all cells have sinks so most prisoners can wash their hands before meals. When prisoners are in the ‘Back Cells’ in Younger and Skye they do not eat in the dining rooms. Nor are they always able to wash their hands. This should be addressed.

9.28 In the most recent SPS Prisoner Survey, prisoners in Cornton Vale assessed the standard of their menu 12% below the SPS average; and the condition of the food when they receive it 10% below the SPS average.

9.29 Managers only rarely sample prisoners’ food. When they do, this takes place in the kitchen. Managers should sample food every day in both the kitchen and in the places where prisoners eat.

Laundry

9.30 The laundry cleans and irons all clothing for the establishment. It also provides the clean bedding and other cell linen for the housekeeping workers. When a cell becomes vacant the housekeeping party refreshes the kit. This is an excellent system and works very well. The housekeeping party also provides the wing cleaners. This is an area of **good practice**.

9.31 Prison laundry is transported in wheelie bins. The bins are cleaned in the laundry while the clothes are being laundered so clean clothes go into a clean bin. A timetable identifies the items to be sent for laundering each day and from where.

9.32 The internal management system for the handling of laundry is excellent. The logging system ensures losses are at a minimum. The “dirty” area is cleaned and sterilised after the laundry has been sorted and put in the washing machines. Prisoners are trained in separating items into different categories. The whole system is logical and clear. It works very well. Damage or shrinkage very rarely happens.

9.33 Although some additional equipment has been acquired in the last year the higher number of prisoners means that the system is under pressure to cope. There are four industrial washing machines, one smaller specialist washing machine and one domestic washing machine. Drying capacity consists of two industrial dryers. There is often a delay in items being dried. More drying capacity is required.

9.34 The laundry employs 20 convicted prisoners. Each day 16 prisoners attend work, the other four being on a rest day. The prisoners are expected to work hard and are “rewarded” with the four-day working week in recognition of this. All prisoners are given a practical induction. This is personalised and takes a different amount of time depending on the capacity of the individual.

9.35 Good team working takes place in the laundry. Some prisoners are undertaking complex activities on their own initiative. It is disappointing that they cannot currently receive certification for skills acquired. This should be addressed.

9.36 Overall, the laundry is very clean and tidy, and provides an excellent service. There is a clear order and process to the work undertaken. The officer in charge is able to provide support and guidance to prisoners specific to their own abilities.

Canteen

9.37 A bag and tag system is in place, and tends to run smoothly. Untried prisoners can access the canteen three times per week on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Convicted prisoners have access on a Wednesday or Thursday. There have occasionally been problems in getting canteen sheets back from the halls. This can mean that there is a delay in prisoners receiving their purchases.

9.38 Cornton Vale uses a corner of the canteen sheet as a means of communicating with prisoners. This is a good idea that has been used effectively in other prisons.

9.39 The canteen list is reviewed regularly. Prisoners are able to influence the contents of the list through the Business Improvement prisoner consultation meetings. Suggestions are minuted to the Finance and Administration manager who provides a response indicating why something will or will not be added to the list. In response to prisoners' requests, low fat and sugar free items are highlighted so that prisoners who opt for a more healthy diet can identify the options more easily. This is in line with a national slimmers organisation, and is an area of **good practice**. Prisoners have the opportunity to purchase a small refrigerator for their cell through the canteen. The establishment has an arrangement with a supplier to source the refrigerators and check them prior to issue. Sundry purchases are bought by one of the ILU prisoners. These tend to be fruit and special cosmetic products.

10. GOOD PRACTICE

10.1 The ‘care’ options such as the ‘Care Orderly Room’ and restorative practices (paragraph 3.15).

10.2 The community placement scheme (paragraph 5.23).

10.3 The “Destiny’s Design” initiative (paragraph 7.7).

10.4 Prisoners in the cleaning work parties carry out their own monitoring of performance and put in place remedial measures where appropriate (paragraph 7.16).

10.5 An information pack is sent to the families of prisoners and this includes an invitation to attend an informal meeting with staff (paragraph 8.2).

10.6 The housekeeping party from the laundry refreshes the kit when a cell becomes vacant. This party also provides the wing cleaners (paragraph 9.30).

10.7 Low fat and sugar free items on the canteen list are highlighted (paragraph 9.39).

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 SPS should ensure that women under escort are subject to the level of security appropriate to the risk they present, and that they are treated with reasonable standards of personal dignity and humanity (paragraphs 3.5 and 8.13).

11.2 SPS and the Escort Contractor should review the scheduling of escorts (paragraph 5.5).

11.3 SPS should engage with criminal justice partners to review the need to escort prisoners to Cornton Vale when there will be no sentence to serve (paragraph 5.7).

11.4 A more structured approach to pre-release should be developed (paragraph 5.20).

11.5 The facilities in the main visits room should be improved (paragraph 8.5).

11.6 A full assessment should be made of needs within Cornton Vale which might be met by psychology and whether current psychology provision can meet this (paragraph 8.29).

12. POINTS OF NOTE

12.1 The problem with ant infestation in Younger House should be addressed (paragraph 2.11).

12.2 Access to the arts and crafts activity room in Younger House should be improved (paragraph 2.13).

12.3 The “back cells” in Younger House should be fitted with beds, EPIC and integral sanitation (paragraphs 2.14 and 9.3).

12.4 The establishment should review the appropriateness of using ‘wheelie bins’ to transport prisoners’ personal belongings in Bruce House (paragraph 2.17) and prison laundry generally (paragraph 9.31).

12.5 Staff in the residential units should understand the criteria used for prisoners being upgraded to Peebles House from Bruce House, and participate in the process (paragraph 2.21).

12.6 The “back cells” in Skye House should be fitted with beds, EPIC and integral sanitation (paragraphs 2.22 and 9.3).

12.7 The reasons for switching off the telephones in Wallace House at 11.30pm should be examined (paragraph 2.28).

12.8 The establishment should review the practice of leaving the Independent Living Units unlocked during the day when prisoners are inside (paragraph 2.32).

12.9 The reasons for the increased number of minor prisoner-on-prisoner assaults should be examined (paragraph 3.2).

12.10 The length of time some women previously held in Inverness, Aberdeen and Dumfries spend in escort vehicles when attending court should be reviewed (paragraph 3.6).

12.11 The discussions and outcomes from the weekly Custody and Order meetings should be cascaded to all staff (paragraph 3.7).

12.12 Prisoner complaints should be entered on the SPS Prisoner Records System (paragraph 3.11).

12.13 The establishment should introduce a more robust audit trail of prisoner complaints (paragraph 3.12).

12.14 The process for allocating a prisoner's addiction casework should be clearer (paragraph 4.10).

12.15 The perception of prisoners that access to addictions services is not to an acceptable standard should be addressed (paragraph 4.11).

12.16 The establishment should encourage local health services to respond to requests for the prescribing of methadone (paragraph 4.12).

12.17 On admission, medical interviews or assessments should be carried out in the Health Centre rather than in the reception area (paragraph 5.2).

12.18 There should be consistency in taking prisoners from the reception to the residential areas in the evening (paragraph 5.4).

12.19 More contact should be made with potential learners during induction (paragraph 5.11).

12.20 Consideration should be given to allowing long-term prisoners to attend the Local Risk Management Group when their case is being discussed (paragraph 5.15).

12.21 The possibility of using the SPS videolink network to facilitate one-to-one interviews by key workers from local prisons to Cornton Vale should be examined (paragraph 5.18).

12.22 The establishment should continue in its efforts to recruit more dental resource (paragraphs 6.17 and 6.18).

12.23 Learning centre staff and work party officers should liaise more effectively to plan and implement a more integrated approach to the learning activities of prisoners (paragraph 7.3).

12.24 Consideration should be given to creating an appropriate teaching kitchen to extend and improve prisoners' learning opportunities (paragraph 7.4).

12.25 The arrangements for the provision of books and magazines from the library should be improved (paragraph 7.5).

12.26 Education provision for prisoners with learning difficulties should be improved (paragraph 7.6).

12.27 The learning centre should identify clearly the extent of need in relation to improving prisoners' core skills in communication and numeracy and put in place appropriate programmes to meet this need (paragraph 7.9).

12.28 The learning centre should implement measures to increase the number of prisoners attaining qualifications in core skills (paragraph 7.17).

12.29 The prison should review the range of activities offered in residential areas with a view to identifying activities that engage the interest of prisoners more fully (paragraph 7.18).

12.30 The quality of provision in the learning centre should be evaluated (paragraph 7.20).

12.31 The policy document for the Mother and Baby Unit should be updated (paragraph 8.7).

12.32 Clearer guidance in terms of training for staff working in the Mother and Baby Unit should be provided (paragraph 8.9).

12.33 The establishment should examine ways of spreading the recreational time available to prisoners in the gym in a more equitable way (paragraph 8.21).

12.34 The establishment needs better facilities for physical education (paragraph 8.24).

12.35 SPS should clarify the position in relation to programme requirements not just for Cornton Vale but for all establishments (paragraph 8.39).

12.36 Efforts should be made to ensure that the Black and Ethnic Minority Group continues to meet (paragraph 8.40).

12.37 Race relations meetings should be minuted, a formal Race Relations Monitoring Group should be set up, and a review should take place of whether a Race Relation Officer should be allocated to each residential area (paragraph 8.41).

12.38 Consideration should be given to providing a wider range of products for ethnic minority prisoners in the canteen, and ensuring that they are always in stock (paragraph 8.43).

12.39 The imbalance in levels of competence in core training should be addressed (paragraph 9.16).

12.40 Untried prisoners should get the same service from the kitchen as convicted prisoners (paragraph 9.22).

12.41 Prisoners in the 'back cells' in Younger and Skye should always be able to wash their hands before meals (paragraph 9.27).

12.42 Managers should sample the food every day in both the kitchen and in the places where prisoners eat (paragraph 9.29).

12.43 More drying capacity in the laundry is required (paragraph 9.33).

12.44 Prisoners working in the laundry should be able to receive certification for skills acquired (paragraph 9.35).

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

Written material and statistics received from the prison prior to Inspection

Prison's self-assessment

Governor's briefing

SPS Prisoner Survey

Prison Records

SPS background material

Discussions with prisoners

Discussions with prisoners' families

Focus groups with prisoners

Interviews with prisoners

Interviews with prison staff

Focus groups with staff

Observations

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