



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

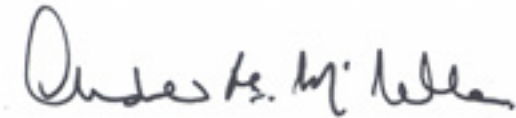
Report on HMYOI Polmont

INSPECTION 30 APRIL – 4 MAY 2007

The Scottish Ministers

In accordance with my terms of reference as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, I forward a report of a full inspection carried out at HMYOI Polmont between 30 April – 4 May 2007.

Eight recommendations and a number of other points for action 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

September 2007

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1. PREAMBLE

1.1 When a large new hall was opened in 2003 it was the beginning of the end for slopping out at Polmont. The accommodation in Iona Hall was described in the inspection report of 2004 as *excellent. The cells are large, bright and airy, there is a separate toilet within each cell, the communal areas are open and fresh, and even after a year, the whole hall is really clean.* Perhaps even more importantly, that report also concluded that good accommodation for prisoners and good working conditions for prison staff were making a significant impact on the attitudes of prisoners and on relationships within the hall.

1.2 This inspection took place after the opening of another new hall, Monro Hall, even bigger than Iona Hall. Slopping out has now ended at Polmont and every prisoner lives in good accommodation. That is a huge step forward: now only in Peterhead do prisoners have to use chemical toilets. Polmont is so much more a decent place now. It was an unhappy time for Scotland when the people who were living in the worst conditions in our prisons were under 21 years of age. The provision of very good living conditions throughout Polmont is very satisfying.

1.3 It is almost tragic, therefore, that the advantage gained for these young men by the opening of the new halls is threatened by overcrowding. These two huge halls are not nearly big enough to hold all those who might expect to be in them. Indeed the question must now be asked whether or not it is realistic to seek to hold all convicted prisoners under the age of 21 at Polmont: the site is very overstretched.

1.4 As well as the new halls, Polmont has seen the building of two splendid new activity centres, which provide training facilities as good as anything to be found in the community. On the other hand, the old reception area quite fails to meet the needs of the high numbers of young men, some, very vulnerable, admitted to Polmont.

1.5 At the time of inspection there were 682 young offenders being held in Polmont. There were also 89 in Friarton Hall at Perth, and 21 on Home Detention Curfew. The use of Friarton Hall for under-21s is working well; and HDC is raising few problems. However, the two other ways of dealing with the high numbers who are admitted to Polmont are less happy. More and more young men are being re-classified as “adults” and transferred to adult

establishments. This frustrates the aim of a single site for under-21s separate from adult prisoners. Many prisoners over the age of 20 are now reclassified. And more and more of those who remain in Polmont are sharing cells designed for one person. As ever higher numbers are crammed into Iona Hall the significant advantages of the new hall welcomed in the report of 2004 are in danger of disappearing.

1.6 One of the worst consequences of overcrowding is that prisoners spend longer and longer periods of time locked in their cells. Because there are increasing numbers of prisoners, and no increase in work spaces available or in the number of prison staff available to supervise, it is not unusual for a convicted young offender in Iona to spend as much as 20 hours in one day locked up in a cell for one person with a stranger. No matter how clean and bright the hall is, this is not a good recipe for tackling offending behaviour. “Tragic” is the right word when splendid new accommodation is prevented by very high numbers from making the difference it could have made to changing the lives of young men whose lives need to be changed for the sake of everyone in Scotland – and not least for the sake of themselves.

1.7 As is nearly always the case, where there is overcrowding and where “time in cell” is high, the people who suffer most are prisoners on remand. Some of them can sometimes be locked up for at least 23 hours out of 24. The title of an HMCIP report on remand prisoners published in 1999 was “Punishment First – Verdict Later”. Many of these remand prisoners in Polmont will not receive a custodial sentence.

1.8 Despite the difficulties which overcrowding place in the way of prison staff as well as in the way of prisoners, staff relate to prisoners extremely well. From a large number of conversations with prisoners during the inspection there were almost no suggestions of intimidating or demeaning attitudes from staff towards them. There was evidence from prisoners, from the observations of inspectors and from the Visiting Committee of a high level of motivation among staff committed to helping the young men in their care. Shouting and swearing at prisoners happens very rarely: staff at Polmont take pride in treating prisoners properly. How much more effective their contribution would be were it not damaged by overcrowding and long periods of time in cell.

1.9 Their contribution might also be more effective if the new halls were smaller. Several prison staff told inspectors of the difficulties of engaging on an individual basis with such large numbers of prisoners. The design of the hall may not help: there is a temptation for prison staff with administrative duties to perform to remain within the “hub” area at some distance from those who are living in the hall (although it was good to see staff mixing freely with prisoners during recreation periods).

1.10 It is normal during inspections for prisoners to complain most vigorously about healthcare. That was not the case in Polmont. No doubt some of the complaints in adult prisons are related to a desire of prisoners to produce a more accommodating attitude among health professionals to drug prescriptions. Healthcare in Polmont is very good. Arrangements to prevent self-harm and suicide are also good.

1.11 Also very good are some opportunities to encourage young men convicted of crimes to reassess their lives and to develop new skills. “Constructs” which has replaced “Cognitive Skills” has recently been introduced. The early signs are good. The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Project has been commended previously in inspection reports; despite the reduction in staff time available to it it still can provide a life-changing experience. The same can be said of a new Young Enterprise Scotland programme. An excellent pre-release course helps both in the practical and in the mental and psychological aspects of release into the community after a long period of detention.

1.12 In a television programme broadcast in 2006 Polmont was described (by the then Governor) as “the most violent prison in Scotland”. Whether or not it deserved that title, it is clear that steps have been taken to reduce violence. This report reflects the contribution of the anti-violence programme, the statistical evidence, the observations of the visiting committee and the comments of prisoners and staff.

1.13 At the time of inspection there were two children under the age of 16 being held in Polmont. It is deeply regrettable that the detention of children held in Polmont in the last twelve months has continued despite widespread opposition to the practice. In the last two years there have been 42 such people in Polmont; one of these was held for 105 days, another for 69 days; 10 of these were 14 years old. They mix freely with older prisoners. No doubt this is better than segregation, but it is a bad arrangement for children that they are kept

together with 16 and 17 year olds who have been convicted of criminal offences. The fact that 14 year olds seem to like such company in Polmont is not a good argument in favour of it. Nor is the fact that they are treated well there. All of the legal requirements are met and staff attitudes (and, it must be said, the attitudes of the older prisoners) are very protective. But their presence there is still wrong.

1.14 Food has been a problem in Polmont for a long time and continues to be so. The problem of portion size remains, although more meat is provided within the portions; and the problems associated with transportation have got worse with the opening of Monro Hall. The amount of fruit and vegetables provided has increased slightly but still falls well short of five pieces per day. On the other hand chips (which suffer more than most foodstuffs from being kept for a long time in a heated trolley) are served every day.

1.15 It is very odd that the principal method of communicating with prisoners in Polmont is by notice-board. This is odd not just because of the reading difficulties of many of the prisoners; but in particular because the notice-boards are situated in the “hub” area of the halls. Prisoners are not allowed to linger in the “hub” for long enough to be able to read the notices. The notice encouraging prisoners to contact the education department was dated 2005 and suggested that prisoners should contact a named person who left Polmont 12 months before the inspection. These are two signs of communication difficulties within the prison which need to be addressed: others are the lack of opportunities for consulting prisoners about food, and inadequate preparation of prisoners before Integrated Case Management Conferences.

2. CONDITIONS

Population

2.1 Polmont is overcrowded. It has 491 ordinary cells and 6 special cells. Some of the cells are built to hold more than one person, consequently the establishment has a design capacity of 623. The prison is also contracted by SPS to hold 623 young offenders (YOs). On the first day of inspection 682 YOs were unlocked.

2.2 This prisoner population was as follows:-

By hall

Iona	308
Monro	365
Dunedin	7
Beechwood	2

By classification

Remand	151
Short-term convicted	381
Long-term convicted	150

By age

Under 16	2
16	32
17	115
18	170
19	207
20	152
21	4

2.3 Three of the 682 were foreign nationals held on immigration service warrants or awaiting deportation.

Accommodation Areas

2.4 There are four accommodation areas. Iona and Monro are large new residential halls. Beechwood is a small unit outside the prison for prisoners nearing the end of their sentence and Dunedin is the Segregation Unit.

Iona Hall

2.5 Iona hall has three levels. Each level consists of two sections separated from a central staff area by grille gates and floor to ceiling bars.

2.6 Level 1 has 16 double rooms, 48 single rooms, one disabled room and two “buddy” rooms. As a result of the high numbers, ten single cells have had bunk beds fitted. This means that this floor can hold up to 95 prisoners. Level 2 has 16 double rooms and 56 single rooms. As a result of the high numbers, ten single cells have had bunk beds fitted. This means that this floor can hold up to 98 prisoners. Level 3 has 16 double rooms and 56 single rooms giving it a capacity of 88. In addition, level 1 has two “special needs” cells used in extreme circumstances.

2.7 Throughout the hall it is very evident that there is a significant difference between sharing a cell built to hold two people and sharing a cell that was built for one. In the single cells there is less floor space, less shelving, fewer cupboards and a smaller window. The single cells holding two people are cramped and claustrophobic. However, prisoners who were sharing cells, almost without exception, said that they preferred to be sharing. They said that having a “co-pilot” helped to pass the time. Although it would be wrong to disregard the stated preferences of prisoners it must be noted that there was no evidence of consistent risk assessment being undertaken in allocating prisoners to shared cells.

2.8 Level 1 in Iona holds remand prisoners; level 2 a mixture of short-term convicted prisoners and remands; and level 3 holds long-term prisoners. Level 2 is the admission section for Polmont. Prisoners will be held on level 2 when they arrive unless they require protection. After they have completed their initial induction they will be allocated to another section in the prison.

2.9 The standard of decoration in the hall was good. In the communal areas walls, floors and ceilings were bright, clean and looked fresh. The sections are very large and this makes communication and supervision difficult. An officer has to shout when prisoners are in the sections to make him/herself heard. Recognising individual prisoners from a distance is very difficult.

2.10 The standard of decoration in cells was variable but on the whole quite good. Walls and floors were generally clean and graffiti free. The most disappointing feature in most cells was the poor quality of the curtains. They were very drab, torn and unsightly. In some cells the walls were covered by magazine pictures, posters and photographs. Some of these were pornographic. Management should control the amount and type of materials prisoners are allowed to display on the cell walls.

2.11 Although there had been a lockable cabinet built into the units in the cells, none of these were in use nor did it appear that they had ever been. This means that prisoners do not have anywhere to keep personal belongings. This should be addressed.

2.12 Prisoners said that it was easy to keep the cells clean – if you wanted to. There was a ready supply of cleaning equipment and materials. A housekeeping party is employed to clean the cells in readiness for admissions: this system works well.

2.13 Facilities in the sections are good. There is a servery, gym, shower area and communal seating and tables. Recreation equipment is located in the sections. This consists of pool, snooker and table tennis. However, access to the facilities is difficult. Prisoners do not get recreation every day due to the limits on numbers imposed by staff. As a result of the numbers on levels 1 and 2, it is also difficult to have a shower every day. In the most recent SPS Prisoner Survey only 46% of prisoners in Polmont said they could have a shower every day. That is a 17% reduction from the year before and is 40% below the figure for SPS generally. This is another example of the impact of overcrowding, and it is particularly disappointing that it is so big a problem in a new hall like Iona.

2.14 All cells have integral sanitation, in-cell power, a kettle and a television with access to terrestrial channels and one freeview channel (controlled from a centrally located digibox).

2.15 Getting into, out of and around the hall can be a problem for staff. The finger recognition system does not work. Officers inside the hall have keys but anyone else has to contact the central control room to be let through doors. This can cause delays and is a significant burden on control room staff. On occasion this can delay Integrated Case Management Conferences or interviews, as well as delay the escorting of prisoners to or from the hall. The fob-based system fitted in Monro hall works much better and uses much of the

same technology as the system in Iona. The system for staff gaining access to Iona hall should be improved.

Monro Hall

2.16 Monro hall has four levels. Each level consists of two sections separated from a central staff area by grille gates and floor to ceiling bars.

2.17 Level 1 has 20 double rooms and 52 single rooms. This means that this floor can hold up to 92 prisoners. Level 2 has 20 double rooms and 44 single rooms. This means that this floor can hold up to 84 prisoners. Level 3 has 20 double rooms and 52 single rooms giving it a capacity of 92. Level 4 has 20 double rooms and 48 single rooms giving it a capacity of 88. In addition level 2 has one disabled room, two “buddy” rooms and two “special needs” cells, and Level 4 has one disabled room and two “special needs” cells.

2.18 Prisoners sharing cells in Monro only do so in cells built for two people. Prisoners who were sharing cells said that they preferred to be sharing.

2.19 Level 1 holds convicted short-term prisoners. Level 2 holds prisoners under 18 years of age, which includes a mixture of convicted and remand prisoners. Children under 16 years of age would normally be located on this floor. Level 3 is the Addiction Support Unit. It holds short and long-term prisoners who have asked for help with an addiction problem. Level 4 is the Protection Unit. It holds a mixture of sex offenders and non-sex offenders.

2.20 The standard of decoration in the hall was good. In the communal areas walls, floors and ceilings were bright, clean and looked fresh. The sections are very large and this makes communication and supervision difficult. An officer has to shout when prisoners are in the sections to make him/herself heard. Recognising individual prisoners from a distance is very difficult.

2.21 The standard of decoration in cells was variable but on the whole quite good. Walls and floors were generally clean and graffiti free. In some cells the walls were covered almost completely by magazine pictures, posters and photographs. Some of these were pornographic. This was a particular feature in the cells on Level 4 where sex offenders live.

Management should control the amount and type of materials prisoners are allowed to display on cell walls.

2.22 Although there had been a lockable cabinet built into the units in the cells, none of these were in use nor did it appear that they had even been. This means that prisoners do not have anywhere to keep valuables. This should be addressed. In Iona and Munro Halls the facility exists for prisoners to lock their own door from the inside. Staff and prisoners saw this as a particularly useful feature for prisoners in a protection unit, as it gives a prisoner the opportunity to find a place of safety if he feels threatened.

2.23 Prisoners said that it was easy to keep the cells clean - if you wanted to. There was a ready supply of cleaning equipment and materials.

2.24 Facilities in the sections are good. There is a servery, gym, shower area and communal seating and tables. Recreation equipment is located in the sections. This consists of pool, snooker and table tennis. However, access to the facilities is difficult. Prisoners do not get recreation every day due to the limits on numbers imposed by staff.

2.25 It is relatively easy to get access to the showers in Monro, as there are more showers fitted and less overcrowding than in Iona.

2.26 All cells have integral sanitation, in-cell power, a kettle and a television with access to terrestrial channels and one freeview channel (controlled from a centrally located digibox).

2.27 Monro is an excellent facility: when it opened in 2006 it replaced older halls, some of which still had slopping out.

Beechwood Hall

2.28 Beechwood hall is located just outside the perimeter fence. It can hold up to 16 low supervision prisoners in the last stages of their sentence as they prepare for release. Prisoners are given a great deal of freedom and responsibility in Beechwood. They are allowed weekend home leaves and are given the opportunity to participate in a work placement.

2.29 There were only two prisoners living in Beechwood on the day of inspection, as the unit is winding down to make way for the next phase of the development of the establishment. Prisoners who would previously have been held in Beechwood are now transferred to Friarton Hall in HMP Perth, which has been turned into a national top end for young offenders. Prisoners can access placements and participate in home leaves from Friarton.

2.30 Beechwood is a fairly compact building. The bedrooms are small, but given that they are really only used to sleep in, they are fit for purpose. The rest of the unit contains a laundry/utility room, a multi gym, a kitchen, a lounge area and a staff office. Officers only visit the unit at irregular intervals. There is CCTV coverage in the lounge area. The front door is locked between 8.30pm and 7.30am. Prisoners cook their own food and once a week, one of them goes with an officer to a local supermarket to stock up the freezer.

2.31 There is a telephone and a pool table in the lounge and prisoners spend their leisure time playing pool, using the gym or watching television. They can also play football on the grass area behind the unit. Despite its imminent closure, Beechwood is a good facility that provides young offenders with appropriate opportunities to prepare for release.

The Dunedin Unit

2.32 The Dunedin Unit is a new, purpose built, Segregation Unit. On entering the unit there is a large office which doubles as an Orderly Room when required. Next to the Orderly Room is a holding room and a store. There are interviewing facilities within this corridor.

2.33 Access to the main area is via a grille gate which opens into a central area where the staff work station and a small servery are situated. Immediately off the central area adjacent to the staff workstation is the entrance into three exercise yards which are fully enclosed. Accommodation areas are to the left and right of the central hub.

2.34 On one side are six cells, three of which are designed for hygienic cleaning during a “dirty protest”. There is also a silent cell, a medical room and a toilet and shower area. On the opposite side there are eight cells, a well equipped fitness room and a toilet area.

2.35 The cells have electric power, a toilet, wash hand basin, a bed and a small fixed metal seat and table. The toilet is not enclosed despite prisoners eating in their cells.

Exercise Areas

2.36 Facilities for exercise in the fresh air are excellent. The halls have fenced off yards and Dunedin has the standard Segregation Unit exercise yard seen in all of the new Segregation Units built in the last few years. All exercise areas were clean and spacious.

2.37 However, access to the exercise yards can be difficult. In both Iona and Monro halls the timing of exercise periods is unpopular. Prisoners are expected to book their place the day before and are only offered the opportunity to spend time in the fresh air from 7.00am the next morning. Very few attend. The system of accessing exercise in the fresh air should be improved.

2.38 The exception to this are the arrangements for protection prisoners in Monro, Level 4. Their exercise takes place in the afternoon. On the day exercise areas were inspected in Monro nobody had attended from Level 1 or Level 2, five had gone from Level 3 and 27 had gone from Level 4.

2.39 The situation in Iona is particularly poor. Prisoners there are not only expected to take their exercise early in the morning but their sessions are often restricted to 30 minutes. On the day exercise was inspected only eight prisoners from Iona took up the opportunity. Arrangements at the weekend are little better although the timings are slightly later. The time exercise is offered to prisoners should be changed.

2.40 Jackets for use by prisoners who wished to exercise in inclement weather were held in a cabinet in the basement in Monro. Officers in Iona were not able to access jackets for the same purpose for their prisoners. Prisoners in Iona should have jackets to wear in inclement weather.

2.41 More encouragingly there are occasions when some prisoners can gain access to the exercise yards in the evenings. This is not built into the regime and is an initiative taken by

the residential staff on duty. For example, prisoners living on Level 3 in Iona were able to play football in the fresh air on one evening during the inspection.

Catering

2.42 Although the population has increased significantly in the last year the kitchen facilities remain the same. A new kitchen is planned as part of the next phase of the development of the establishment. This means that the catering arrangements will be managed from a temporary kitchen between the closure of the existing facility and the opening of the new one.

2.43 The kitchen and serveries were clean. Prisoners involved in the preparation and issuing of food were competent and had received basic training.

2.44 The establishment has been subject to health and infection control checks and no major issues were identified.

2.45 There is a significant distance between the point of preparation of food and the points of serving, and Polmont suffers many of the problems seen in other prisons. Food is prepared long before it is served and it deteriorates in the trolleys. Prisoners were particularly critical of the quality of the chips (which were served every day).

2.46 A four-week menu cycle is in place for convicted prisoners. Remand prisoners access the servery on a rotational basis without prior choice. Fresh fruit and vegetable choices are available each day but it is not possible to reach the Scottish Executive's target of five portions every day even if a prisoner chose fresh fruit and vegetables at every opportunity.

2.47 Catering staff reported that resources had been found from other budgets in Polmont to increase the catering budget guidance of £1.57 per prisoner per day to £2.00 per day. This extra money meant they could put more meat in the portions and helped to pay for the regular "themed" nights in the prison. Prisoners were unaware that this action had been taken and had not noticed any improvement.

2.48 Special dietary needs are catered for. The local Imam helps with the diet choices for Muslim prisoners. All of the meat purchased by the prison is Halal. The appropriateness of this should be reviewed given the small number of Muslim prisoners in the establishment.

2.49 Meals are served at appropriate times and a snack is given to cover the lengthy gap between the issuing of the evening meal and breakfast, particularly at the weekend. Clean plates and cutlery are available for every meal. Prisoners collect their meals from a servery in their own section and return to their cells to eat. Prisoners in Iona who share cells that were built for one person do not have sufficient space to sit and eat. They use their unit as a table. In the cells in Iona and Monro toilets are in cubicles. In Dunedin, prisoners eat in a cell where the toilet is not screened off. It is disappointing that although there are tables and chairs in the halls they are never used for dining. Ways should be found to encourage prisoners to eat together at these tables.

2.50 Food focus groups take place and it was clear that the points raised by prisoners, both positive and negative, had been recorded and had influenced the service. Managers occasionally sample meals in the kitchen. Managers should also sample meals from the serveries in the halls.

2.51 The major issues for catering in Polmont are broadly the same as the ones identified in the inspection in 2004. The portions are not large enough for young, growing men and there are not enough healthy choices available.

Canteen

2.52 A 'bag and tag' system is in place, with SPS staff managing the collation of the canteen order forms. The orders are passed to a contractor who handles the supply of all canteen orders. The contractor is responsible for the provision and filling of the tagged bags.

2.53 Convicted prisoners have access to the canteen once per week. Remand prisoners can access the canteen three times per week. The most recent Prisoner Survey reported that 62% of prisoners regarded the canteen service as ok or better.

2.54 There are no items available on the canteen order form to help prisoners with their family links (e.g. birthday cards). However prisoners can request special items such as cards

and chocolates for friends and family through a 'sundry items purchase' form. Administration staff pass these forms to the supplier and they are delivered the following day.

2.55 In addition to these items prisoners can also request writing materials, modelling kits and fruit. Prisoners did state that fruit was very expensive to buy in this way and that it did not always arrive in good condition.

2.56 The choice and range of goods provided covers cigarettes and tobacco, stamps, batteries, groceries, toiletries and confectionery. Of the groceries and confectionery on the list the vast majority of products are fat, sugar or carbohydrate based. There are very few healthier option alternatives to these. There was no specific provision made for food or non-food goods or items which might be more reflective of the range of cultures within the establishment.

2.57 Prisoners did comment on what they felt was the relatively high cost of some canteen goods, particularly in comparison to other establishments. In the most recent Prisoner Survey 54% of prisoners thought that the price of goods in the canteen was fairly bad or very bad.

2.58 The canteen order sheets have a small suggestion box included, which asks prisoners which items they would like to see included in the canteen list. The Canteen Administration Manager indicated that appropriate suggestions are considered by the canteen operator, who in turn, liaises with the Canteen Administration Manager on matters of security and suitability. Some of the suggestions made by prisoners have been acted upon, such as the introduction of protein supplements and particular types of confectionery. No feedback is given to prisoners about their suggestions, though it was noted that there were plans to introduce a prisoner forum to cover food and canteen services.

Clothing and Laundry

2.59 The laundry is a new purpose built facility. It employs ten prisoners. Prisoners are currently unable to achieve a qualification as there is not an appropriately qualified SVQ assessor available. This was being addressed.

2.60 The laundry was well run, clean and in very good order. Prisoners and staff were positively engaged and committed.

2.61 The laundry operates a daily 'net-bag' system, with colour-coded tags denoting each hall. In general there was little complaint about the system, although there were comments that laundry was often returned damp and this occasionally caused clothes to smell of mildew. It seems that this results from bags being too full. It was apparent that there is little effective communication between the halls and the laundry that might allow these issues to be raised, discussed and resolved.

2.62 Although there appeared to be no formal complaints recorded about the loss of garments, significant comment was made during the inspection about clothes going missing from the laundry bags. As a result prisoners often expressed a preference to wash their own clothes in the showers in the halls. This does not allow garments to be properly disinfected.

2.63 The clothing worn by prisoners was of a reasonable quality and was not stained or frayed. Following the initial issue of personal clothing prisoners are required to approach hall staff for replacements.

2.64 Full bedding (sheet, quilt cover and pillow slip) is supplied on arrival. Prisoners did not raise any issues regarding the quality of bedding, nor the frequency of laundering. Bed linen and quilt covers are changed and washed weekly. Quilts are washed quarterly.

2.65 There were a number of complaints about the quality of the foam mattresses: they become very uncomfortable and compressed in a short space of time. In the most recent Prisoner Survey 64% of prisoners stated they thought the condition of their mattress was fairly bad or very bad.

3. SAFETY

Escapes, Absconds and Physical Security

3.1 There has been one escape from Polmont since the last inspection. There have been no absconds.

3.2 As part of the site re-development Polmont now has a perimeter wall on three sides and an inner fence on the full perimeter. The fence is alarmed and topped with dannert wire. The outer wall will be completed in the next phase of the site development and this will provide a full double perimeter barrier. There is extensive CCTV coverage of the inside of the establishment and of the perimeter fence and car park.

Supervision Levels

3.3 The system for allocating and reviewing supervision levels is managed very well. The information gathering and assessment processes are open and systematic, and the organising of review boards is excellent. This is crucial to the internal progression system and also underpins the system for identifying prisoners for transfer to the national top end for YOs at Friarton. The system is transparent and prisoners and personal officers are given the opportunity to contribute.

3.4 An electronic database has been created which helps ensure that submissions are received in time for deadlines to be met. The system is well established in Iona and is now being extended to cover Monro.

3.5 Boards take place on a monthly basis and appropriate checks and balances are built in to make sure that all relevant information is considered and an objective and reasonable judgement is arrived at. Prisoners have, with appropriate limitations on the basis of the information given to them, the right of appeal against a decision.

Escort Handover Procedures

3.6 A Prisoner Escort Record (PER) is generated by general office staff for all young offenders leaving Polmont under the control of the escort contractor. The form is then passed to Health Centre staff to add any relevant medical information. Thereafter the gate staff check the computerised prisoner record system for relevant security information. The contractor undertakes “core” and “non core” escorts. “Core” escorts are those which take prisoners to and from courts. “Non core” escorts range from hospital appointments to funerals to home visits.

3.7 Inspectors observed both “core” and “non core” escorts. The vehicles were clean although one of the 14 cell vehicles had a lot of graffiti in the cubicles. Not all vehicles had water on board. All prisoners knew where they were going on escort and most were given reasonable prior notice. The pressure on prisoner spaces however meant that some had their planned transfers brought forward.

3.8 The quality of information on the PER forms was adequate. Polmont management however felt that the quality of information could be variable.

3.9 Some prisoners felt that they were held too long in courts after their case had been dealt with before returning to the establishment. This view was supported by management although regular meetings with the contractor had succeeded in reducing this. Prisoners reported that they were generally satisfied with how they were treated by escort staff but raised concerns that there were no seat belts in the vehicles. No prisoners were given a safety briefing prior to the commencement of a journey. Safety briefings should be part of the escort process.

3.10 Most escorts leave the establishment on time but it was reported that there were some problems with missed hospital appointments resulting from the contractor being late or not turning up. These appointments then had to be re-made. During the inspection an inpatient hospital escort was picked up by the contractor within the agreed timescales.

3.11 One of the major disadvantages for some young offenders is that Polmont is a single site for convicted young offenders and for many young remands. This means that subsequent

court appearances can mean lengthy journeys and very long days. If, for example, there is a court appearance at Elgin the prisoner is required to leave Polmont at 5:45am. If this is a trial diet which can last several days, the prisoner has to endure several long journeys. Sometimes a temporary transfer to an establishment closer to the court can be arranged but this depends on the level of overcrowding at that establishment.

Admission and Induction Procedures

Reception

3.12 The layout of the reception has remained largely unchanged for the past 30 years yet the role it is required to perform has changed dramatically. At one time the establishment only received transfers from other prisons and did therefore have some control over the number of admissions and their arrival time. Now that Polmont takes admissions direct from some courts they have no control over the number or the time of day that these prisoners will arrive: which can sometimes be very late at night. The reception deals with an average of 70 new admissions each week. Although the area no longer meets the needs of a busy establishment admitting some vulnerable young men, staff were supportive in their approach. A new reception is planned as part of the ongoing development of the establishment.

3.13 There are no communal rooms within the reception. The main part consists of a front entrance door leading to a small vestibule area with a desk where new admissions are identified in the company of escort staff. A cleaning cupboard and a toilet are adjacent to the front desk. A narrow passageway, with 20 cubicles on either side leads to another desk behind which are two offices, one of which has a small room attached.

3.14 At the inner desk a short passage has a further six cubicles. The nursing station is on the left and an opening to the right leads to a small windowless office, another larger room for the reception passmen and the property store.

3.15 The reception is staffed by a team of nine officers consisting of three officers on early shift and three officers on late shift. In the morning, for approximately one hour, staff from the visits group escort prisoners due for court or liberation to the reception. Polmont holds young offenders from all over Scotland and this means that some who are due for court have

to be unlocked early in the morning. Prisoners due for a court appearance or liberation in the morning do not receive a shower before leaving the residential area. This should be addressed.

3.16 In the evening, Monday to Thursday, a member of staff is assigned to the reception to escort prisoners back to the residential units. This officer is not always available due to shortages in other areas and on a busy night this puts extra pressure on the reception staff as they also have to escort the prisoners from the reception to the residential areas.

3.17 All admissions to Polmont enter reception by the front door. They are called forward to stand behind a line on the floor approximately two feet from the desk. This is a very regimented and unwelcoming practice. **It is recommended that the practice of calling new admissions to stand behind a line two feet from the reception desk should stop.** At this point the individual is identified and then placed in one of the cubicles. If someone is identified as requiring protection, or they are vulnerable or a first offender they are located in one of the cubicles close to the inner desk. Warrants, property and Prisoner Escort Reports are checked and signed for.

3.18 If someone is admitted to Polmont reception at around 4:30pm it is unlikely that he will be taken to the residential area until some time after 7:00pm. Some prisoners also arrive late at night. These prisoners miss their evening meal in the residential area, and there is no food available in the reception, even though reception passmen remain in reception during this time and eat their meals in the area. This is unacceptable. **It is recommended that food and drinks are made available in reception for prisoners who arrive too late to receive their evening meal in the residential area.**

3.19 Once all of the admission paperwork has been completed the admissions are taken individually to the inner desk where they are searched in a cubicle with a half door. The half door on the cubicle allows for some maintenance of dignity. They are allowed to keep their own underwear and socks or are given a pack with new underwear and socks. This is an area of **good practice.**

3.20 They are then given a boiler suit which they wear until they arrive in the residential area where they are supplied with denims and polo shirts. Property and valuable items are

checked and recorded on the property card in the presence of the prisoner who then signs the card. Cash is also checked in his presence. Valuable property is held in a locked cabinet in one of the offices behind the inner desk. All new admissions to Polmont are given a telephone account PIN number and an immediate credit of 30 pence. However, they are not allowed to use the telephone until they arrive in the residential area. There is no shower in reception and there is no guarantee that a shower will be permitted in the hall on the evening of admission. This should be addressed.

3.21 The prisoner's details are added to the computerised record system in an office behind the desk. During the time the details are being recorded on the computer the prisoner is required to stand. A chair should be made available.

3.22 The ACT2Care risk assessment is conducted in a small windowless office close to the property store. This room doubles as a parcel store and gives the impression of being cluttered and unwelcoming. There is a desk and two chairs at which the risk assessment interview is conducted. Multiple use of this area does not allow for the creation of an appropriate environment for the conducting of such interviews. Alternative arrangements for this should be sought.

3.23 The medical interview is undertaken, in private, in the small medical room. The room is furnished with a desk, two chairs, a computer, filing cabinets and a wash-hand basin. However, the room fails to create a positive environment in which to conduct admission medical interviews.

3.24 There is a lack of effective information notices available within the reception area. This has been highlighted in previous inspection reports. There is a standard notice which identifies a range of languages but Polmont reception does not have a notice of prison routines in a range of languages. Information in notice form, and in a range of languages, should be made available in reception.

3.25 The property store has changed little over the years and as a consequence is struggling to cope with the additional demands of the increased numbers. There is a twin row of double hanging racks running down the middle of the room. Additionally, around the walls there is metal shelving from floor to ceiling on which are stored property boxes. There is also a

washing machine and drier. Boxes around the floor made the area look untidy and cluttered. Better housekeeping would make a modest improvement but the area is no longer able to cope with the property generated from the increase in prisoner numbers. Alternative arrangements for the safe storage of property in reception should be made.

Induction

3.26 Induction takes place in one of the new purpose built activity centres. The Links Centre has accommodation on the top floor. The facility is well appointed with three good group rooms and a number of rooms for one-to-one interviews. There is a first line manager and four staff. There are an average of 70 new admissions into Polmont weekly. Convicted mainstream admissions are taken to the Links Centre on the day following admission and are given a quick one-day induction.

3.27 Remand and convicted protection prisoners are taken to the Links Centre three days per week for induction. Protection prisoners have a one-to-one interview, during which they receive the core screen assessment and information about the booking of visits and wider contact with the family. These prisoners are then directed to identified service providers to have their needs addressed.

3.28 The National Induction Programme is very full. The 'Powerpoint' presentation is suitably adapted to meet the needs of the Polmont population. However, some of the information on accommodation is now out of date and the presentation should be amended to take account of these changes. There is a lot of information to absorb and consideration should be given to whether the induction period should be extended for remand and convicted protection prisoners, or what additional assistance needs to be given.

3.29 Prisoners serving sentences of six months or more who are in the mainstream system will get a two-week induction programme. This covers additional issues such as skills assessments, manual handling and food hygiene. Some of the training is certificated. This extended programme is not available to prisoners on protection. When a prisoner is not able to speak English, interpreting services are used and the induction information is translated.

3.30 Induction for mainstream prisoners in Polmont is very good. Protection prisoners miss out on some of the more in-depth induction available to mainstream individuals. Consideration should be given to how prisoners on protection could benefit from the certificated part of the extended induction.

3.31 Families of first time prisoners are invited into the prison to participate in the induction session. Family members have a short time with induction staff who explain the procedures and they then link up with the prisoner to discuss the outcome of the core screen and subsequent interventions.

3.32 The establishment also runs family awareness sessions. These occur once per month when prisoners have returned to the residential areas after work or education. Induction staff give a presentation followed by a tour of the establishment. At the conclusion of the tour prisoners join their families in the visit room. Induction staff remain in the room while the visit is taking place so that they are on hand to answer any questions. This is an area of **good practice**.

Suicide Risk Management

3.33 Young offenders are potentially a very vulnerable group, yet in Polmont the number subject to ACT2Care procedures is not high. On the first day of the inspection there was one prisoner subject to ACT. This would suggest that the preventative measures in place such as a proactive approach to mental health; a perception among prisoners that they feel safe; a positive relationship between staff and prisoners; and improved living conditions are having a beneficial impact in this area.

3.34 The last suicide in Polmont was in May 2005. On average there are 12 prisoners placed on high risk ACT per month. The majority of these are identified on admission and are reduced or removed from ACT with 48 hours. An inspection of paperwork indicates that risk assessments are being conducted appropriately and case conferences are carried out in line with the policy.

3.35 There are six “safer” cells in Polmont. Two are located in Iona level 1, two on Monro level 4 and two on Monro level 2.

3.36 When a prisoner is considered “at risk” or “high risk” there appears to be a standard approach adopted which is: “safer cell, canvas clothing and no articles in use”. However, a case conference should analyse the risk and develop a more individualised, person centred care plan. The ACT2Care Policy also tries to encourage normalisation through articles in use, such as TV where appropriate. **It is recommended that the standardised approach to the management of “at risk” or “high risk” individuals is reviewed.**

3.37 There appears to be very little to stimulate prisoners held under high risk conditions. It was reported that the Personal and Social Development Unit (PSDU) would support some individuals subject to ACT, but not those at high risk. The monitoring of daily care plans of high risk prisoners by managers is inconsistent and should be improved.

3.38 Polmont does not operate a Listener Scheme, and has not done so for some time, despite posters throughout the establishment advertising one. Polmont management consider that young offenders are adequately supported without the scheme. The Listener Scheme has proved to be a valuable addition to support mechanisms in other establishments and management should review the need for such a scheme in Polmont. If they are confident that the evidence supports not having a Listener Scheme, the posters should be taken down.

3.39 Polmont does not appear to have a strong and regular link with the local Samaritan group and this should be reviewed. The local suicide management group meets quarterly as required by the Policy.

Violence

3.40 A television programme shown shortly before the inspection depicted Polmont as a violent place to live. This contradicted what prisoners reported in the Prisoner Survey and to inspectors. Serious acts of prisoner-on-prisoner violence showed a downward trend with 16 recorded instances in 2005-06 and 8 in 2006-07. Although instances of lower level violence such as fights was still high there was a similar downward trend from 360 in 2005-06 to 313 in 2006-07.

3.41 The number of prisoners who had had to be restrained and relocated also showed a downward trend. In 2005-06 there were 139 removals using Control and Restraint techniques and in 2006-07 there were 87. A sample of paperwork inspected was in order. Polmont does not video record planned compulsory relocations which use force.

3.42 Polmont has committed a great deal of resource into managing the prisoner-on-prisoner violence problem. All incidents, no matter the level of seriousness, are investigated by a line manager and a report is submitted to the Multi-Disciplinary Violence Action Group. If during the investigation it becomes apparent that the incident is an assault the victim is given the opportunity to make a complaint to the police. Should he refuse to do so he signs a proforma in the presence of the investigating officer indicating that he has been the victim of an assault but does not wish to make a complaint to the police. The proforma is headed “Central Scotland Police”, which implies that the process is taking place in the name of the Chief Constable of the Police Force. This does not separate the work of the police and the prison service and the use of Central Scotland Police proformas should stop.

3.43 The Multi-disciplinary Violence Action Group is chaired by the Deputy Governor and comprises the Head of Operations, a psychologist, and representatives from the intelligence unit, residential areas, and prisoner programmes. The group meets on a monthly basis and analyses the information from the violence investigations. This has allowed the identification of “hot spots” and high risk activities. Some of the action taken has been tighter control of prisoner unlock and movement. There is also a greater control of the number of prisoners allowed out at any one time during recreation. A consequence of this is that prisoners now spend more time locked up in the evenings and at weekends.

3.44 In some violence cases “Restorative Justice” has been used successfully. Another very positive initiative is the “Personal Support Plan” which is used for suitable individuals involved in low level violence. This initiative originates from the Violence Steering Group and is operated in partnership between residential staff and the youth centre. The intervention is usually used after a fight. At the Orderly Room the individuals involved are given the opportunity to be assessed for the programme. If both agree, the Orderly Room award is suspended pending successful participation in the programme. The main activity is completing a work book which provides a self analysis and then invites the participants to respond to scenarios. Residential staff are on hand to check progress and offer support. The work book takes approximately two weeks to complete and may identify a need for further interventions such as assertiveness skills or participation in a youth project. At the end of the work book the adjudication manager will review its contents with the individual, and advise and encourage as appropriate. The use of “Restorative Justice” and the “Personal Support

Plan” for individuals involved in low level violence in the establishment is an area of **good practice**.

Night Duty

3.45 Night duty cover is provided by a group of permanent night duty staff who have built up a high level of experience and expertise. The group is divided into two teams who work seven consecutive nights. Two members of the team are not permanent but undertake a rotational night duty from the gate group. This is to ensure that there are staff at the gate and in the CCTV room, on night duty, who are skilled in the use of the specialised equipment.

3.46 Night orders and fire safety awareness are of a high standard. All staff are confident in their routine duties and emergency procedures, and are trained in their core competencies. Although no one on night duty was trained in first aid all had been trained in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

3.47 In-built technology in the new residential areas provides a very effective audit trail of staff contact with prisoners during the night. Inspectors witnessed the establishment’s response to an emergency. Managers were confident in their decision making and effectively deployed staff to minimise any impact from the incident and ensure prisoners and staff were safe.

4. RESPECT

Relationships

4.1 The observed relationships between staff and prisoners throughout the establishment were positive and mutually respectful. First names or Mr were always used and no inappropriate name calling or racial epithets were used. Staff names were displayed on name badges which were worn. A number of prisoners reflected very positively about the way they were treated by staff and a strong sense of improving relationships was evident. However, a small number of prisoners commented less positively about relationships and felt a small minority of staff did not treat them well and were unnecessarily unhelpful, rude and/or deliberately intimidating.

4.2 It was clear that senior management had taken the issue of developing good staff and prisoner relationships seriously, and that this has had a positive impact and effect upon both staff and prisoners.

4.3 Informing prisoners of sensitive or unwelcome news appears to be linked mainly with serious illnesses or bereavement. The process for managing this is geared towards assessing the wishes of the prisoner to visit a sick relative or attend a funeral. This process is well set out and comprehensive in its approach. It encourages Chaplaincy intervention and general support for the prisoner. Otherwise there is a more informal approach to dealing with generally sensitive information, which is left to the discretion of residential staff working directly with the prisoner.

4.4 Staff are aware of the need to be respectful to prisoners and maintain confidentiality and privacy. Training to embed this is facilitated and reinforced through basic training, SVQs, and the need to adhere to the Data Protection Act. It is recognised that these areas are covered in the relevant training. There were no instances of complaints or legal challenges in this area.

Equality and Diversity

4.5 It is understood that the new build programme addressed and achieved compliance with the legislative requirements of disabled access to public buildings under the Disability

Discrimination Act. Making the older buildings compliant was regarded as a matter to be remedied as part of the final re-development of the establishment.

4.6 The information provided from the Prisoner Record System (PR2) at the time of the inspection stated there were 40 prisoners in Polmont registered as having a disability. The descriptions of the disabilities were limited to Asthma and Epilepsy. Although this may reflect an accurate current snapshot, it is difficult to imagine that no other prisoners have any sight, mobility, mental health or hearing impairments that might be regarded as a Disability under the Disability Discrimination Act. A better understanding of what constitutes a disability and how this is recorded on PR2 is required.

4.7 A manager is responsible for 'disability issues', although the remit of this and the policies to support people in the establishment with a disability, were unclear and did not appear to link together effectively. There is no co-ordinating activity pulling together the interested parties in the establishment best placed to identify, develop, manage, monitor and support a co-ordinated approach to the issues surrounding disability. **It is recommended that a Disability Issues Co-ordinating Group is established.**

4.8 Equality and Diversity Training has been delivered to 95% of Operational staff and to 93% of all staff.

4.9 There were eighteen prisoners in Polmont from an ethnic minority background during the inspection. Three of these were persons awaiting deportation.

4.10 HMYOI Polmont is required to adhere to the SPS Race Relations Policy, which is actively supported by a Race Relations Manager and Committee. There was high level of awareness of basic race relations issues amongst operational staff. The names of the Race Relations Committee (RRC) members were advertised in most staff area of the halls. However, the process of how a prisoner might contact a member of the RRC was not clear. Meetings of the Race Relations Committee were informal. The Race Relations Committee should meet on a formal basis at least once a year.

4.11 Prisoners making a complaint of racial discrimination are required to report the matter using a Confidential Racial Incident Report Form (CRIR). One such complaint was made in the past year.

4.12 CRIR forms were available in most staff areas in the halls, but prisoners were generally not expected to do any more than pass through this area, en route to the hall. It was difficult to see how a prisoner might access a form personally. The Race Relation Manager indicated that in Polmont the expected process is for a prisoner to approach a member of staff with their complaint and they will progress it.

4.13 All CRIR submissions are investigated by the Race Relation Manager and signed off by the Governor.

4.14 A recent Audit was carried out by a sub group of the Race Equality Management and Integration Team. Overall the audit was positive and listed minor actions.

Searching

4.15 The searching of prisoners is required occasionally and is carried out in line with the appropriate SPS policy and prison rules. As part of this prisoners seemed to accept the inevitability of searches occurring and understood the reasons. Body searches are only given by an officer of the same gender and were not done in a humiliating way. Prisoners raised no issues in relation to searches.

5. CONTACT

Family Contact

5.1 Polmont provides the opportunity for prisoners and families to maintain contact in a variety of ways. The primary one is through visits in the prison. There are also home leaves for prisoners who progress to Beechwood. Occasionally, Exceptional Escorted Days Absences (EEDA) will also occur. These allow the prisoner to visit a close family member who is unfit to travel to the establishment.

5.2 An induction visit for the families of new prisoners is particularly impressive. The first session consists of presentations from staff covering different aspects of the prison. Visitors are then escorted to some parts of the prison to see what it is like for themselves.

5.3 Convicted prisoners book their visits in the halls. Visitors book visits to remand prisoners by telephone. Convicted and remand sessions are run separately. There are two afternoon sessions and one evening session during the week. At the weekend there is one session in the morning and two in the afternoon.

5.4 The system for managing the arrival and departure of visitors works very well, and officers manage the process sensitively and professionally.

5.5 Closed visits are used only when strong evidence exists of a drugs incident, or the potential for one, or where there has been a violent incident related to a visit. Visitors are told in writing if they are banned and will be told the length of their ban.

5.6 When prisoners are being transferred the prison expects them to tell their visitors. This can cause problems when the transfer takes place at short notice because of overcrowding. Management should improve this system to avoid visitors coming to Polmont when the prisoner has been moved to another prison.

5.7 In response to a point of note made in the 2004 inspection report, management introduced a subsidised shuttle bus to transport prisoners' visitors from the railway station to

the establishment. This service is no longer in place and management should consider re-introducing it.

The Visits Room

5.8 Inspectors observed visitors arriving in the prison and the visits sessions; and spoke to visitors. It was clear that staff manage the balance between security and a positive environment very well. Visitors were very complimentary about the attitude and behaviour of officers.

5.9 Visit sessions are at set times. Visitors are encouraged to arrive early so that the necessary security procedures do not encroach on their visit time. The system works well and waiting time is kept to a minimum. The close proximity of the waiting room to the visit room helps with this.

5.10 The waiting area is comfortable and welcoming. There are notice boards and leaflets available. There are good toilet and baby changing facilities in the waiting area. The Family Contact Development Office is located in the waiting area. It was pleasing to see the office door open during visit sessions so that visitors could ask questions or just have a chat before their visit. However, the office is staffed as an out of hall activity and may not be open if there are staff shortages in the halls. This should be addressed.

5.11 The visits room itself is small, drab and dated and it would be easy for the supervision of visits to be obtrusive. Through the use of CCTV and the strategic placement of the officers this is avoided. Visits will not be taking place in this room for much longer and that means that there has been little recent investment in decoration. Rising prisoner numbers means that the basic entitlement is sometimes not met and staff have to be flexible in moving remand and convicted visits around. Polmont needs a new visits room.

5.12 A parental bonding visit scheme is in place. There is a play area for children adjacent to the visit room and parent and child can play together during these sessions.

Information

5.13 The information for visitors online about Polmont is excellent. It provides almost everything a visitor would want to know before coming to Polmont. There are details about visiting the prison as well as very detailed information about the regime available to prisoners. It contains contact details of staff who anyone is likely to need to contact in any situation. A direct dial telephone contact number is also available. This is an area of **good practice**.

5.14 This information is supplemented by an induction session for new visitors which goes a long way to allaying the fears of parents, partners, family and friends in that it covers all aspects of life in the prison and includes a walk through some of the prison during a patrol period.

5.15 A protocol exists for communicating with a named family member or partner after an incident involving a prisoner. The prison handles this sensitively and the wishes of the prisoners are a primary consideration. The FCDO is also an excellent information resource to visitors.

Searching

5.16 The searching procedure for visitors is appropriate. A walk-through metal detector and an x-ray machine are used to monitor people and possessions going into the visits room. Anything more obtrusive in the way of searching is carried out only when intelligence information exists to indicate the need for that. This is often undertaken in partnership with the police or the SPS Dog Unit.

5.17 Inspectors observed the admission procedure. Officers were courteous and professional. Families understood the need for the searches and complied with the procedures. The atmosphere observed during the process was one of quiet efficiency. The searching procedures are thorough but compatible with human dignity.

Communications

5.18 There are sufficient telephones in each section to meet the demand, even in the most overcrowded areas of the prison. Prisoners are told that their calls will be monitored and there are notices posted next to each telephone making this clear.

5.19 The telephones are located in the sections within each hall and are used mainly during recreation sessions. The area is very noisy and it is difficult to conduct a conversation in these circumstances.

5.20 Telephones in Monro have canopies fitted. Those in Iona had canopies fitted but most of these have now been taken down or vandalised. Even with the canopies, background noise is very intrusive. The prison needs to either relocate the telephones to a quieter area or create more effective “telephone boxes” to reduce the background noise.

5.21 There is no limit to the number of letters prisoners can send (subject to finances) or receive. Outgoing letters are collected and posted every day. Incoming letters are sorted and transported to the halls as soon as possible and distributed at meal times or during association periods. When letters are opened it is in the presence of the prisoner. There were no issues around written correspondence.

6. ENTITLEMENTS

Legal Rights

6.1 Prisoners are made aware of how to contact a solicitor, the visiting committee, members of parliament, the courts and the complaints commissioner during induction. Staff also have the required information available in the halls and the Links Centre. For convicted prisoners there are personal officers nominated as a point of contact. For remands there are named staff for advice on particular topics.

6.2 Strict protocols are in place for the management of legally privileged mail. These protocols were observed during the inspection. A database is maintained to record the issuing of legal mail. Legally privileged mail is handled appropriately.

6.3 Assistance to foreign nationals in contacting consular officials is covered during induction with supplementary action picked up by the Race Relations Officers. A recent Race Relations audit identified that this process was working well. Officers in the halls are aware of their responsibilities in assisting young and often naive men in the preparation of their case. Most officers in Polmont have undertaken an e-learning package offered by SPS in ECHR and Human Rights legislation.

Management of Disciplinary Procedures

6.4 Orderly Rooms take place in the halls. The rooms used are small but appropriately furnished. Although an inherently formal process the hearings observed in Polmont were suitably relaxed.

6.5 The unit managers act as adjudicators. They go through the Orderly Room guidance stage by stage making sure that the prisoner understands what is happening. The style and language used helps to relax prisoners and make the experience less intimidating for them. It was very evident that prisoners get a chance to state their case.

6.6 Timescales and procedural requirements were in place, and, if appropriate, mediation is an option available to the adjudicator. This is discussed with the prisoner at the time.

Prisoners are informed of their right of appeal if found guilty. There were no concerns over the procedural elements of the Orderly Room process. However, of 215 cases heard in March there was a finding of guilt in all but four cases. This seems very high, and management should examine the reasons for it.

6.7 It was also clear that some charges attracted harsher punishments in Polmont than they did in other prisons. Prisoners refusing to go to work tended to lose five nights recreation, five days earning and the right to access personal cash for five days. The severity of punishments awarded in the Orderly Room should be reviewed.

Religious Observance

6.8 The multi-faith Chaplaincy Team is comprised of representatives of The Church of Scotland, The Roman Catholic Church and an Imam. All visit the establishment regularly, however the Imam raised some concerns about his ability to observe the full role of a religious leader (including the role of education and community leadership) to prisoners of the Muslim Faith based on the number of hours he was contracted to work for the SPS. It was not clear how other minority religions, for example such as Sikh, Hindu, Buddhism and Judaism would be quickly accessed to allow prisoners an opportunity to practice their religion.

6.9 Religious Services for the main faiths are scheduled for appropriate times. However it was felt by the team that staffing problems sometimes had a negative effect upon the attendance of prisoners who wished to worship on the appropriate day. A particular concern in relation to staff escorting prisoners to worship on a Thursday was raised.

6.10 As a result of the redevelopment of the establishment, the current provision for a worship area is classrooms in the Links Centre. In terms of the phasing of redevelopment the new 'Faith Centre' will not be completed until 2009. One comment made reflected the view that 'we feel like we are camping here just now'. Concerns were voiced about the relative sense of safety and privacy the temporary accommodation provided prisoners as well as the noise levels in the Links Centre and the generally limited facilities that were not designed for the purpose of worship. Since moving to temporary accommodation there had been a

reduction in face to face communications with prisoners, partly as a result of prisoners moving to Friarton and others not being able to see the Chaplaincy Team at the right time.

6.11 The view of those spoken to was that the Faith Team had a good sense of integration and participation in the day to day support of prisoners, particularly general and bereavement counselling and in the ICM process.

Prisoner Complaints Procedure

6.12 Prisoner complaint forms are readily available in the halls. However, staff try to resolve problems before they reach the formal process.

6.13 There is a built in appeals procedure to the Complaints Procedure. This is explained at each stage of the process. Some prisoners said that they had used the CP system and that their complaint had been taken seriously, although it had not always been resolved to their satisfaction.

6.14 Membership of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) includes Chaplains, youth workers, learning centre staff and administration staff. A residential unit manager chairs the ICC. There are between two and three ICC's per week. In the past when a complaint has related to a difference of opinion between a prisoner and a member of staff, mediation has been used to resolve the situation. This is an area of **good practice**.

6.15 When raising a complaint, if a prisoner indicates he has problems reading or writing, he will be assisted by an officer, or a prisoner peer tutor will be contacted.

6.16 The procedure for dealing with prisoners' complaints works well.

Management of Segregation

6.17 During the inspection there were nine prisoners being held in the Segregation Unit. Six were held on a full Rule 94, i.e. in excess of 72 hours, one for less than 72 hours and two on a punishment. Paperwork checked was in order and reasons had been given for their location in the unit. Regular case conferences are held for those subject to Rule 94 and are

attended by a member of staff from the area where the prisoner was living prior to location in the unit.

6.18 Inspectors were made aware of a regime plan information document but prisoners spoken to had not been given a copy. The document also makes reference to the Listeners Scheme yet no such scheme has been in operation for some time as highlighted elsewhere in this report. The document should be updated and made available to all prisoners held within the Segregation Unit. Prisoners in the unit receive family visits in the main visits room. They are allowed two visits per month but depending on the day or time of the visit they may only get 90 minutes per month. This is in violation of the Prison Rules. Rule 63(2) of *The Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions (Scotland) Rules 2006* states: “Subject to Rules 77 and 78, the Governor shall allow a prisoner, at such times as the Governor considers reasonable, either: a) not less than 30 minutes in any period of 7 consecutive days, or b) not less than 2 hours in any period of 28 consecutive days, for the purposes of receiving visits.” **It is recommended that all prisoners are given the opportunity to take their visit entitlement as set out in the Prison Rules.**

6.19 Everyone has the opportunity to spend one hour in the fresh air daily. Access to the fitness room depends on individual care plans. The care plan also stipulates articles allowed in use such as a radio, books, writing materials, a television and in-cell education. There is no access to television during patrol periods. This should be reviewed. Access to the telephone is available during periods of unlock.

6.20 When overcrowding is at a critical level newly admitted prisoners or those due for liberation may be held in the Segregation Unit overnight. This should only be used as a last resort and not for vulnerable new admissions.

Children Under the Age of 16

6.21 In 2006-07 there were 20 individual children under the age of 16 held in Polmont. Two of these had been admitted on three separate occasions and two on two occasions, some being remanded more than once. At the time of inspection there were two being held, one of whom was interviewed by inspectors.

6.22 The procedures in relation to this young person were carried out appropriately. A case conference had been convened within 48 hours after admission; he had daily contact with the prison based social worker; he had daily family contact via visits; he was attending education; was wearing his own clothes; and could purchase items from the canteen Monday to Friday. He was housed in Munro Hall and mixed with the other prisoners. He stated that he had no concerns about this. Of concern was that he had only seen his community social worker once whilst he had been remanded (which had been for over three weeks) and this was to attend his case conference. Although the prison based social worker visited him and kept him up-to-date with events he did not know what the plans were for him in relation to where he was going from Polmont or when this might happen.

6.23 Overall, there is an effective practice and procedure policy in place for children under the age of 16: but they should not be there at all.

7. ACTIVITIES

Learning, Skills and Employability

Introduction and Context

7.1 The SPS Activities Unit Manager has overall responsibility for managing learning, skills and employability (LSE) within Polmont. The SPS contract for provision of LSE in Polmont is with Motherwell College. A Learning Centre Manager, employed by Motherwell College, supported by an Assistant Learning Centre Manager is responsible for learning provision. The Activities Manager (SPS) has responsibility for PE, out of cell activities and production and work parties.

Staffing and Resources

7.2 Learning Centre staff are well qualified. The majority of staff hold a teaching qualification or were working towards one. However opportunities for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for learning centre staff are not systematic or comprehensive. Seven officers have successfully gained the Foundation Studies course in Informal Learning and Community Education. Sports assistants supplement the core PE instructor team to deliver a comprehensive sports programme. The quality of accommodation for learning is very good. The Links Centre and Learning Centre are well-appointed, comfortable and contribute to a positive learning experience. Workshop facilities are of a very good standard and reflect current industrial practice. The library has recently been refurbished and there is good access to PE. However there are insufficient linkages between and across all staff involved in learning, skills and employability. This results in missed opportunities for staff to share their experience, skills and expertise in developing complementary learning activities. College staff delivering education programmes do not have access to a wide enough range of resources to support the different levels of ability within class groups. In general-purpose classrooms, the standard of ICT equipment to support learning and teaching was poor. Arrangements for staff to identify and access training on diversity and inclusive learning approaches were not systematic. As a result most staff were unaware of the impact of equalities legislation in relation to their specific role and were not sufficiently aware of approaches to assist learners overcome barriers to learning.

Access to Learning, Skills and Employability

7.3 All prisoners are introduced to LSE during the induction process which includes a structured interview and a tour of the Learning Centre. Learning staff regularly and proactively visit the halls to encourage individuals to participate in learning. A wide range of vocational and educational opportunities is available. Most prisoners take advantage of these opportunities to develop skills and attain qualifications. Prisoners are not penalised or receive any differential in pay for attending education. Children under the age of 16 attend at least 15 hours of education per week. The Outlet Youth Centre effectively engages prisoners in issue based programmes such as sexual health and anti sectarianism. Literacy and Numeracy needs are well-catered for through small group tuition and one-to-one peer tutoring.

7.4 There were good examples of staff developing programmes to meet the needs of specific groups of learners. The independent skills programme provides a useful and practical preparation for liberation and living within a community and learners had responded well to the variety of content and practical activities. The PE department offers a good range of accredited and relevant courses with a high success rate. Polmont is also involved in the Young Enterprise Scotland scheme. This is a 12 week course which has the potential to lead to an enterprise workshop. The first part of the course involves learning the skills required to start up and run a small business. If the team have a good business idea they can apply to the Governor for a start up “loan”. This requires them to develop a business plan. If successful in starting up their business they will then sell their product to staff and fellow prisoners. Detailed accounts are kept, audited and the start up “loan” is repaid to the Governor. If required the prisoner will be given support from Young Enterprise Scotland on liberation. Polmont’s participation in the Young Enterprise Scotland Scheme is an area of **good practice**.

7.5 Where possible staff make efforts to enable learners to complete assessments prior to transfer or liberation. However there is no tracking mechanism to ensure prisoners continue or complete their learning. Remand learners do not have access to learning opportunities and there are insufficient opportunities for engaging in other types of learning such as short distance learning programmes. Prisoners complained about the time delay from induction to

starting learning. Communication of learning opportunities was by word of mouth. Improved methods for communicating learning opportunities to prisoners should be considered.

Assessment of Need

7.6 There are systematic arrangements in place within the Links Centre for profiling all offenders using the “Alerting Tool” as part of the induction process. All prisoners entering Polmont complete this process. This assists in the identification of literacies needs. Prisoners sentenced to one year or more undertake a core skills profile and individual learning plans are created for all learners undertaking education programmes. Motherwell College review Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) on a six monthly basis. Outlet Youth Centre staff effectively engage with under 18s within an informal drop in facility to identify individual needs and concerns. Although learning plans have been created, they are not made available to each member of staff working with an individual. As a result, most staff do not use learning plans effectively to engage learners in discussing preferred learning styles, reflecting on progress and setting new targets. There are no formal links between staff involved in workshops or PE and those in the Learning Centre to identify and support prisoners’ needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Peer literacy tutors provide an important link in identifying and supporting individual learning needs. There are no arrangements in place to collate information from schools or other previous learning providers to inform learning requirements.

Delivery of Learning

7.7 Staff take considerable care in planning learning activities. There are good examples of staff designing programmes built around the interests of learners. In non- accredited classes, there are good examples of staff involving learners in designing the content and scheduling of activities. In subjects such as art and crafts, learners are encouraged to develop their individual skills and creativity. Staff proactively incorporate presentations and input from external agencies and employers within programmes and as part of special events. This approach generates motivation amongst participants and raises awareness of social and workplace issues. Staff are approachable and responsive to learner needs. Some younger learners benefit from small group activities and value the support given by staff. Peer tutoring is successful in engaging learners to develop literacy skills. PE staff have amended

the delivery of the second Gym Instructors level 1 course in light of experience gained with appropriate learning materials developed. A range of instructional cards assist prisoners to work effectively in the gym. The Outlet Centre anti-sectarian project use a “Blockbusters” type game to encourage prisoners to reflect on their learning. However most programmes do not incorporate independent learning activities to build on group learning activities and increase self-confidence in learning. In the craft class the number of participants results in learners having insufficient access to tutor support which most find frustrating and disengaging. Overall, planning of learning activities does not take sufficient account of the potential for contextualising core skills within vocational activities.

Prisoner’s Learning Experiences

7.8 The Links Centre and Learning Centre accommodation is spacious, bright and attractive and provides a positive and welcoming learning environment. Learners value their good relationships with both learning and activity staff and consider them to be supportive and encouraging. For most this had contributed directly to their engagement with learning. A number of prisoners were studying at higher level. Literacy support helps learners deal with issues in a non-stigmatised way. Learners considered they had good opportunities for learning and some were making progress which exceeded their expectations based on previous learning experiences. Learners talked positively about having discovering new found talent such as art through participation in learning. They enjoyed being in the workshops or classes and were pleased with the range of books in the library. Information on learning opportunities available on display in both the Links and Learning Centres was limited.

Achievement

7.9 A number of prisoners had made significant achievements through their learning. The majority of participants observed and spoken to in the workshops and learning centre were purposeful and knowledgeable about their learning and its positive role on their present situation. PE staff were delivering a number of certificated sports coaching courses on a regular basis with award presentations organised to celebrate achievement. Peer literacy tutors awards are celebrated in the outlet centre. Staff make good use of the Duke of Edinburgh Award sectional certificates to recognise progress made in specific skill/service

area. In the activity areas, Scottish progression awards provide good opportunities for learners to gain vocational qualifications. A narrow range of educational programmes provides good opportunities for learners to progress from access level to higher level awards. A significant number of learners had attained accreditation in communication and IT. There were many good examples of staff successfully re-engaging young men in learning which resulted in them attaining qualifications and increasing confidence in learning. Staff consistently review workshop provision to ensure currency with existing industry requirements. Application of skills such as forklift driving, plumbing and decorating within a realistic environment help learners prepare for the workplace. Peer tutors have successfully completed training based on the national Introductory Training in Adult Literacies Learning (ITALL) programme.

Ethos and values

7.10 All staff involved in learning, skills and employability activities are highly committed and enthusiastic. Prisoners reported very positive and constructive relationships with Links Centre, Learning Centre, workshop and PE staff. Staff are both approachable and supportive. There is a relaxed and positive atmosphere in the learning centre and workshops. Interaction between officers and prisoners is on first name terms. Staff work well together across a number of initiatives. However there is no coherent strategic vision for LSE. The Outlet Centre youth worker liaises with college staff to identify and support learners with Literacies needs. Staff are highly committed to widening employment opportunities for young men being liberated. One member of staff had hosted a special event for 25 employers in the Fife area, to raise awareness of the contribution the young men could bring to their workforce. The event was successful in altering the perception of employers and increasing their openness to employing ex-offenders.

Quality Assurance

7.11 Effective reporting mechanisms are in place to monitor the attendance and attainment of learners in both the learning centre and PE facility. The PE dept maintains detailed monthly records of awards gained. Motherwell College has a system of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) with six monthly reviews for systematically evaluating and improving the prisoner learning experience within the learning centre. However college delivery staff are

not able to access ILPs or contribute to learner reviews. There is no systematic approach to quality assurance across the full range of LSE activities which allows participants and staff to review and evaluate the effectiveness of provision contributing to service improvements. The focus on delivery of target hours conflicts with the drive to deliver high impact learning.

Conclusion

7.12 Staff from across LSE are highly motivated and committed to engaging and supporting prisoners. Staff demonstrate their enthusiasm for developing joint working although this is not formalised in any strategic document or guidance. The facility offers modern and attractive accommodation of a very high quality which contributes to the positive and relaxed learning environment. There is a good range of vocational and educational opportunities on offer with good use of certification where relevant. Prisoners reported increased confidence and self-esteem as a result of engaging in learning. However there are insufficient arrangements for all key staff to self-evaluate and staff were not capitalising on opportunities to contextualise learning within vocational training and PE. A joint recruitment plan to promote all LSE opportunities better had been discussed but was not yet in place.

Library

7.13 The library has been recently refurbished and houses a good stock of fiction and reference books and CDs. It provides access to ICT for word-processing and games.

Other Out of Cell Activities

7.14 PE is provided in one good sized games hall. There is one small but well equipped fitness and weights area. There is good access to astro turf and outside activities. The department offers a good range of accredited and relevant courses with a high success rate. Nothing was appreciated as much by prisoners as PE.

8. HEALTHCARE

Health Services

Overview

8.1 Healthcare services at Polmont are among the most extensive, the best run and the best managed in the SPS. The unique nature of the prisoner population in a YOI – i.e. the relatively low incidence of long-term conditions and the low number of prisoners coming into prison with an established drug-injecting habit - arguably make the challenges less complex than in adult prisons. However this does not lessen the impression that in Polmont, healthcare staff are providing an excellent service to the prisoners in their care.

Accommodation

8.2 The health centre is adequately sized and well maintained. It is very quiet in comparison to some in other establishments, because the majority of health interventions are conducted in the residential areas. Staff feel that this is appropriate as it makes them more accessible and allows them to spend more time with prisoners in ‘social’ type situations. The logistics and challenges of moving prisoners to and from the health centre are also avoided.

Staffing

8.3 The health centre has a full staffing complement and a low turnover of nursing staff. Staff are organised by competence and qualification into discrete teams – primary care staff; mental health and learning disabilities; and addictions. Only primary care staff are involved in the triage of prisoner self-referrals and that, along with the very low number of methadone prescriptions to be dispensed on a daily basis, means mental health and addictions staff are freed up to work more intensively with prisoners.

Access to Care

8.4 In common with other SPS establishments, Polmont operates a triage system to see the doctor. Prisoners complete a self-referral form and nursing staff based in the residential

areas decide if they need to see a GP or can be seen instead by a nurse, dentist, or other allied health professional. Prisoners who need to see a GP are normally seen on the same day as they make their request.

GP Services

8.5 GP appointments are available six mornings each week and also on a Friday afternoon. Working relationships between GPs and nursing staff are good and prisoners made no complaints about access to GP services.

Dental Services

8.6 The dentist is available two afternoons each week and prisoners are seen and assessed within one week of being referred. Thereafter they may wait up to three months for routine treatment. The dentist noted that the majority of prisoners have not seen a dentist since primary school and have little idea of dental hygiene. A recent development has been the investment from Forth Valley Health Board in supplying an oral health educator for one day a week to run dental hygiene sessions.

Mental Health Services

8.7 Mental health nursing staff are able to provide a very responsive service. They are based in the residential areas and are in daily contact with prisoners. They are clearly identified as mental health nurses and feel that far from being unapproachable because of this, it makes it easier for prisoners to speak to them. Prisoners are normally seen on the same day as they self-refer or are referred.

8.8 One team member is also trained in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and is able to offer this service to prisoners.

8.9 Psychiatrists provide two afternoon sessions each week. Psychiatrists and nurses work well together and there is frequent cross-referral: for example psychiatrists refer prisoners with anxiety, sleep problems and other neuroses to nursing staff. Waiting time to see a psychiatrist is around one week.

8.10 ACT2Care notification is relatively low in Polmont and staff feel that this may be due to a combination of good relationships between prison officers and prisoners and the visibility and accessibility of mental health nurses.

Learning Disability

8.11 The health centre has a member of staff with a qualification in learning disability who supports prisoners identified as having a difficulty.

Nurse-led clinics and links to local services

8.12 Every member of the nursing team is a specialist in a particular area of healthcare, and is responsible for leading clinics in that area. This allows the healthcare team to offer a wide range of clinics including smoking cessation and social skills for prisoners with learning difficulties.

8.13 Prisoners can also be referred to Blood Borne Virus and Diabetes clinics at Stirling Royal Infirmary. The prison has good relationships with the health promotion departments at Forth Valley and Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Boards and with the Sandyford (sexual health) Initiative.

8.14 On admission, prisoners are offered both Hepatitis B and Meningitis C vaccinations; uptake of both is good.

Sexual Health

8.15 The approach to sexual health education is impressive. Sessions are delivered to all prisoners during the induction programme. A range of issues are covered in this session, with the focus being placed on the prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections.

Addictions

Overview

8.16 All prisoners are assessed for drug and/or alcohol dependence on admission. Prisoners who are dependent are seen within 24 hours. All prisoners also undergo the

national harm reduction programme within five days of admission unless they sign a disclaimer, at which point they will be visited by a manager to discuss any issues. If the issue of drugs and alcohol are highlighted at the Core Screen Assessment as a contributing factor to the offence, a referral is made to Phoenix Futures.

8.17 Polmont is different from other establishments in that there does not appear to be a significant heroin problem, and methadone prescribing is minimal. There has only been one needle found in the past three years. The approach to methadone prescribing is to encourage a reduction. This strategy appears to be successful with only ten prisoners at the time of inspection requiring methadone.

Phoenix Futures

8.18 Phoenix Futures are currently in the third year of their contract with SPS. At the time of inspection they were dealing with 195 active cases. Most referrals come through core screening and the Links Centre. Phoenix currently provide one alcohol programme a week, a drugs programme in Munro and a smoking cessation programme four times a year. They also provide one-to-one support for prisoners.

8.19 Prisoners said that Phoenix staff were visible in the halls and felt that they could obtain help and intervention as required.

Partnership Working

8.20 Health centre staff also provide a service to prisoners with addiction problems. This service is based on the differing needs of prisoners. However there is duplication in some areas such as smoking cessation with referrals being made to both nursing staff and to Phoenix. Any overlap should be avoided.

Throughcare Addictions Service

8.21 Phoenix Futures is responsible for the Throughcare Addictions Service in the prison and state they are receiving referrals and have established links with many local authorities.

This appears to have been helped by the establishment of the Links Centre where Phoenix is located.

Addictions Support and Prevention Unit

8.22 The Addictions Support and Prevention Unit has been located in Munro Hall since the closure of Nevis. The unit is a very positive initiative and all staff and prisoners reinforced this. However, staff and prisoners also agreed that since the move to Munro many of the benefits of the unit had been lost as a result of the increase in size and the inability to have a clear focus on what had been achieved previously. This situation was being reviewed.

9. REINTEGRATION

Integrated Case Management

9.1 Integrated Case Management (ICM) was introduced to the Scottish Prison Service in June 2006 to replace the Sentence Management process. A prisoner should now receive an initial case conference not later than six months following sentence, and annually thereafter. The pre-release case conference is held six months prior to liberation. At Polmont, case conferences are chaired by the risk and needs officer who conducted the initial assessment or by the ICM co-ordinator

Roles and responsibilities

9.2 ICM policy recommends that in addition to the prisoner attending his case conference, his personal officer, a risk and needs officer, and prison based and community based social workers should also attend. In addition, the prisoner's family should be invited if the prisoner wishes. There should also be the opportunity for contributions from the service providers with whom the prisoner has been working, e.g. addictions, education and programmes staff. There is a lack of consistency at Polmont in the attendance of internal service providers who had been working with the prisoner. Phoenix Futures confirmed that they were not routinely invited even when they were working closely with an individual. Prisoners confirmed that this was the case and that they would find it useful if addiction or programmes staff attended to speak on the interventions in place.

9.3 There is one full-time ICM co-ordinator who works from an open plan office which is also occupied by prison based social workers, programmes staff, a speech therapist and the psychologists. This helps informal communications and strengthens the multi-disciplinary ethos. The staff who conduct the risk and needs assessments are residential officers who undertake this task as a secondary duty. There are 18 staff trained to undertake risk and needs and the ICM co-ordinator will roster two staff per day to undertake the assessments.

9.4 When there are staffing difficulties within the residential area, the risk and needs staff are not always released. This could have a detrimental impact on the ICM timetable although to date case conferences happen within the designated timescales. Risk and needs staff have

approximately two hours each day in which to conduct the assessments and this means that they take several days to complete. Risk and needs staff use a generic risk assessment tool which provides a 'scoring' mechanism. The prison based social worker will also conduct a risk assessment.

Case Conferences

9.5 Since the introduction of ICM there have been 157 case conferences held at Polmont. The case conferences are held in a room in the activities building. The room can hold up to eight people. When there are more than eight present the room is a bit cramped.

9.6 A community based social worker has attended 123 of the 157 conferences either in person or via a video link. Inspectors observed a case conference and found that the emphasis was much more on process than on analysing the information available. Although most of the key areas were covered, the discussion on employment appeared unrealistic from the prisoner's perspective and it was clear that accommodation options had not been made available to the prisoner ahead of the meeting. The process appeared service led rather than needs led. Although there was also some discussion on progress with offending behaviour programmes the programmes facilitator was not present nor was there any discussion on how outstanding needs might link with resources on release.

9.7 Chairing ICM meetings is a very important and challenging role, yet there is no evidence that staff are given specific training for this important role. **It is recommended that a training programme for staff required to chair ICM case conferences is developed across the SPS.**

9.8 ICM files are held securely in the office occupied by the ICM co-ordinator. The files are easy to access and can be withdrawn and read in this area. A random selection of files was checked and found to lack consistency in both layout and content. The ICM functionality on PR2 was also checked and found to hold the same information on the individuals as the paper files.

9.9 The ICM process is about identifying and managing risk. There should be a close link between this and the establishment's Risk Management Group. At Polmont there is no

evidence that this is happening effectively. From 157 case conferences only two prisoners have been referred to the Risk Management Group. In the same period there has been a requirement for three MAPPA referrals. ICM staff were unclear about the criteria for onward referral to the Risk Management Group. **It is recommended that guidelines are developed for the referral of prisoners from ICM Case Conferences to the Risk Management Group.**

9.10 There is a clear commitment on the part of staff to make the ICM process work successfully and there are encouraging signs that it is operating more effectively than Sentence Management. There are however aspects which could be improved. The case conferences appear to be dominated by SPS and prison based social workers. There is a need to have improved attendance of community based social workers and service providers who have had input to the individual's care. There should also be greater emphasis on analysis of risk and individual need rather than "ticking boxes" and trying to match individuals to available intervention resources.

Interventions to Address Offending Behaviour

9.11 Polmont has an excellent new building from which offending behaviour programmes and learning centre activities are delivered. There are four well equipped group rooms and six one-to-one interview rooms plus a large office. There is a dedicated unit of seven programmes staff.

9.12 In the current year Polmont will deliver the Violence Prevention Programme, Constructs, Rolling STOP, First Steps and Alcohol Awareness. The Rolling STOP programme replaces the Adapted STOP which was delivered last year. The Adapted STOP programme was designed for individuals with a low IQ. That gap will now be filled by either re-classifying the prisoner to Peterhead or if that is not a feasible option then psychologists, prison based social workers and community based social workers will work with the individual to manage the risk in the community.

9.13 The "Constructs" programme replaces "Cognitive Skill" across the SPS and it is more resource intensive; requiring two facilitators instead of one. The "Constructs" programme is not suitable for young people under eighteen years of age. This means that some prisoners

formerly considered suitable for Cognitive Skills will not now be able to benefit from a cognitive based problem solving programme.

9.14 Inspectors observed delivery of the Constructs programme. What was observed was very impressive, with highly skilled staff delivering a programme that fully engaged the prisoner group. Staff were highly motivated and committed to their work and it was evident that this impacted on the responsiveness of the group who showed commitment and motivation. Prisoners commented on how “it made you think more” and “how it would make you deal with situations in a different way”. The way in which staff had modified a programme designed for adults for use with young adults was also impressive.

9.15 It is planned to introduce the “Violence Prevention Programme” (VPP) into Polmont this year. Due to a requirement for staff to be trained in the new programme it will not commence before September 2007 and only one will be delivered with a maximum of 10 prisoners. The VPP is a very intensive programme designed to address instrumental violence.

9.16 In order to introduce the VPP Polmont has stopped the “Anger Management” and “Positive Parenting” programmes. Anger Management is a programme that deals with reactive and impulsive violence. In the previous contractual year 47 prisoners completed the Anger Management programme. Additionally there was a waiting list of 96.

9.17 It would seem clear that a programme with a waiting list of 96 people assessed as suitable and awaiting an opportunity to complete is addressing a major need. Most of the prisoners in Polmont have been involved in violence which is reactive and impulsive. Not nearly so many are involved in instrumental violence which is the principal criteria for VPP. Another complication in this change of strategy is that prisoners with an outstanding need for “Anger Management” will not be considered suitable for upgrading and transfer to Friarton.

9.18 With the “Anger Management” programme now discontinued there is a huge level of unmet need in a population where effective interventions, especially for anger and violence are important. **It is recommended that the Anger Management programme is reintroduced to Polmont.**

9.19 It is disappointing to note that the “Positive Parenting” programme has also become a casualty of the decision to deliver the VPP. There are a number of young and inexperienced parents within Polmont who would benefit from the parenting programme. Twenty-three prisoners completed the programme last year. This is a programme which has previously been recognised with a major award at Buckingham Palace from the Princess Royal who is patron to the “Butler Trust”. There are a number of very positive aspects within the course including the “Story Book Dads” - an opportunity for young fathers to video tape bed time stories for their children. Another positive aspect is the family bonding visits. It is unfortunate that this very positive programme will no longer be available to young parents in Polmont. Local management should examine ways in which the most positive aspects of the Positive Parenting programme, such as “Story Book Dads” and family bonding visits, can still be made available to young fathers if the programme cannot continue to be delivered in its entirety.

Progression

9.20 Internal progression is achieved through the “Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme”. The scheme operates at three levels depending on the response of the individual: Basic, Standard and Enhanced. All admissions are assigned to Standard level and individuals can apply for a review after six weeks. Depending on the assessed response a decision will be made by the hall review panel on whether or not promotion to Enhanced is warranted. If a prisoner accrues three unsatisfactory behaviour reports in a three month period then he will be considered for a “demotion” to Basic.

9.21 As prisoners move through the various levels of the scheme they will do so within their own location. The aspects of regime which are affected by the scheme are access to visits, the range of personal property allowed in use; and the number of periods of recreation allowed per week.

9.22 Access to visits is as follows :

- Basic: two visits per month
- Standard: three visits per month
- Enhanced: five visits per month

9.23 This means that some prisoners are not able to access their minimum visit entitlement. The Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions (Scotland) Rules 2006 states: “Subject to rules 77 and 78, the Governor shall allow a young prisoner (who is also not an untried prisoner), at such times as the Governor considers reasonable, no fewer than 2 visits, each of not less than 30 minutes, in any period of 7 consecutive days” [Rule 63(3)].

9.24 Some of the visit sessions are of 45 minutes duration and some are one hour. That means that a prisoner on the basic regime may only get 90 minutes of family visits per month or a maximum of 2 hours. This falls well short of the accumulated visit entitlement over a four week period allowed for in The Prison Rules.

9.25 The visit entitlement has been reduced over the past two years to accommodate the rising numbers. Formerly a prisoner on Basic was allowed three visits per month, on Standard five per month and on Enhanced seven per month. It is now two, three and five respectively. The maintenance of positive family relationships whilst in prison is important. **It is recommended that all prisoners are given the opportunity to take their visit entitlement as set out in the Prison Rules.**

9.26 External progression for Polmont prisoners is to Friarton where there is the opportunity for some work in the community. Short-term prisoners should have achieved low supervision status and have served more than four weeks of their sentence to qualify for a move to Friarton. Long-term prisoners should have addressed identified needs, have met the pre-qualifying time served in their sentence and obtained low supervision status.

9.27 Prisoners who reach the age of 21 do not get the opportunity to transfer to a top end irrespective of where they are in their sentence. They will normally transfer to one of the main long-term establishments and if they are serving a sentence of 10 years or more will enter the adult system via the National Induction Centre at Shotts.

Partner Organisations

9.28 Polmont engages with a wide range of organisations on a formal and informal basis. JobCentrePlus visit the establishment every day, with one full-time and one part-time member of staff. Housing support is provided by part-time staff from Glasgow and

Edinburgh. Staff in the Links Centre have also developed a list of named contacts for each social housing provider in the country.

9.29 Phoenix Futures are a contracted partner and provide addiction support for non sex offenders. SACRO provides support post release as part of the Throughcare Addiction Service (TAS). Alcoholics Anonymous attend the establishment one half day per week and provide a service to mainstream and protection prisoners.

9.30 Includem offers continuity support to prisoners if they have been working with them in the community prior to imprisonment. Transitions is an organisation which works with clients from the Edinburgh area: it operates the “Prisoner Passport Project” which focuses on trying to get young people into education and employment on release. There is an informal arrangement with the Glasgow, Ayrshire, Tayside and Borders Community Justice Authorities as part of the throughcare arrangements.

9.31 The Wise Group operate the “Routes Out Of Prison” (ROOP) project in Polmont. This project offers support to people leaving prison and returning to areas of high deprivation in Glasgow, Paisley and North Lanarkshire. The support is offered via a Life Coach who will engage with a client pre-release and will, if requested, meet the client at the gate on the day of liberation and accompany him to community appointments etc. A number of Life Coaches are ex-offenders or ex-prisoners who have personal experience of the challenges faced by people leaving prison.

9.32 A ‘Partners’ Forum’ is held bi-monthly. This is an informal meeting which has the potential to be much more effective if it was formalised and meetings minuted.

9.33 Overall, Polmont has been very effective in engaging with partner organisations.

Preparation for Release

9.34 Long-term and high risk individuals are managed and prepared for release through the ICM process which is described in detail elsewhere in this report.

9.35 Polmont has an average of 57 liberations per month. Prisoners serving short-term sentences have a pre-release starting point of the Core Screen Assessment which is completed during induction. This forms the basis of the Community Integration Plan. These individuals are interviewed by a member of Links Centre four weeks prior to liberation to determine any outstanding needs. These needs are then referred to appropriate agencies. The individuals are seen again one week prior to liberation to ensure that all needs have been addressed.

9.36 The establishment is also piloting an arrangement where the prisoner's family is invited to attend a pre-release meeting. At the time of the inspection five families had attended, and Polmont plans to evaluate the results.

9.37 Prisoners participating in the Young Enterprise Scotland scheme are given support on liberation if required.

9.38 The Links Centre manager regularly invites employers into the prison to speak to staff and prisoners. The main purpose of this is to encourage employers to offer the opportunity of employment to prisoners on release. A good example of this was a recent visit by the owner of a joinery firm. Following his visit he indicated that if one of the training areas could provide skills to prisoners in fitting kitchens he would offer employment. At the time of the inspection Polmont was evaluating the option of including kitchen fitting in their training programme. This is a good example of matching skills development to market need.

9.39 Prisoners due for release confirmed that their immediate needs such as housing and benefits were being addressed.

10. GOOD PRACTICE

10.1 New admissions are allowed to keep their own underwear and socks or are given a pack with new underwear and socks (paragraph 3.19).

10.2 The family awareness sessions during induction (paragraphs 3.32 and 5.2).

10.3 The use of “Restorative Justice” and the “Personal Support Plan” for individuals involved in low level violence in the establishment (paragraph 3.44).

10.4 The quality of the online information about the establishment (paragraph 5.13).

10.5 When a complaint from a prisoner has related to a difference of opinion between a prisoner and a member of staff, mediation has been used to resolve the situation (paragraph 6.14).

10.6 Involvement in the Young Enterprise Scotland scheme (paragraph 7.4).

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The practice of calling new admissions to stand behind a line two feet from the reception desk should stop (paragraph 3.17).

11.2 Food and drinks should be made available in reception for prisoners who arrive too late to receive their evening meal in the residential area (paragraph 3.18).

11.3 The standardised approach to the management of “at risk” or “high risk” individuals should be reviewed (paragraph 3.36).

11.4 A Disability Issues Co-ordinating Group should be established (paragraph 4.7).

11.5 All prisoners should be given the opportunity to take their visit entitlement as set out in the Prison Rules (paragraphs 6.18 and 9.25).

11.6 A training programme for staff required to chair Integrated Case Management Case Conferences should be developed across the SPS (paragraph 9.7).

11.7 Guidelines should be developed for the referral of prisoners from ICM Case Conferences to the Risk Management Group (paragraph 9.9).

11.8 The Anger Management Programme should be reintroduced to Polmont (paragraph 9.18).

12. ACTION POINTS

12.1 A risk assessment should be carried out before allocating prisoners to shared cells (paragraph 2.7).

12.2 Management should control the amount and type of materials prisoners are allowed to display on cell walls (paragraphs 2.10 and 2.21).

12.3 Prisoners should have access to a lockable cabinet in their cells to keep personal belongings (paragraphs 2.11 and 2.22).

12.4 Prisoners in Iona hall should have access to recreation and a shower every day, regardless of the numbers in the hall (paragraph 2.13).

12.5 The system for staff gaining access to Iona hall should be improved (paragraph 2.15).

12.6 Prisoners in Munro hall should get recreation every day, regardless of the numbers in the hall (paragraph 2.24).

12.7 The system of accessing exercise in the fresh air particularly from Iona hall should be improved (paragraphs 2.37 and 2.39).

12.8 Prisoners in Iona hall should have jackets to wear in inclement weather (paragraph 2.40).

12.9 The appropriateness of purchasing Halal meat for all prisoners should be reviewed (paragraph 2.48).

12.10 Ways should be found to encourage prisoners to eat together at the tables in the halls (paragraph 2.49).

12.11 Managers should sample meals from the serveries in the halls (paragraph 2.50).

12.12 The range of goods available from the canteen should better reflect the range of cultures in the establishment (paragraph 2.56).

12.13 There should be better communication between the halls and the laundry to ensure that prisoners do not overfill their laundry bags (paragraph 2.61).

12.14 The quality of the foam mattresses provided should be examined (paragraph 2.65).

12.15 All escort vehicles should have water on board (paragraph 3.7).

12.16 Safety briefings should be given to prisoners as part of the escort process (paragraph 3.9).

12.17 Prisoners due for a court appearance or liberation in the morning should be offered the opportunity for a shower before leaving the residential area (paragraph 3.15).

12.18 All new admissions should be given the opportunity to have a shower on the evening of admission (paragraph 3.20).

12.19 A chair should be made available for prisoners when their details are being recorded on the computerised system during reception (paragraph 3.21).

12.20 The initial ACT2Care risk assessment should be carried out in a room which is not being used for other purposes (paragraph 3.22).

12.21 Information should be made available in notice form, and in a range of languages, in reception (paragraph 3.24).

12.22 Alternative arrangements for the safe storage of personal property in reception should be made (paragraph 3.25).

12.23 The induction presentation should be updated to take account of the new accommodation in Polmont (paragraph 3.28).

12.24 Consideration should be given to whether the induction period for remand and convicted protection prisoners, should be extended or what additional assistance needs to be given (paragraph 3.28).

12.25 Consideration should be given to how prisoners on protection could benefit from the certificated part of the extended induction (paragraph 3.30).

12.26 The monitoring of daily case plans of high risk prisoners by managers should be improved (paragraph 3.37).

12.27 Management should review whether there is a need to introduce a Listener Scheme in Polmont. If they are confident that the evidence supports not having a scheme, the posters advertising it should be taken down (paragraph 3.38).

12.28 Management should review whether strong and regular links with the local Samaritan Group are required (paragraph 3.39).

12.29 Planned compulsory relocations using force should be video recorded (paragraph 3.41).

12.30 The use of Central Scotland Police headed proformas when recording allegations of assaults should stop (paragraph 3.42).

12.31 A better understanding of what constitutes a disability and how this is recorded on PR2 is required (paragraph 4.6).

12.32 The Race Relations Committee should meet on a formal basis at least once a year (paragraph 4.10).

12.33 The system of informing families when a prisoner has been transferred to another establishment should be improved (paragraph 5.6).

12.34 Management should consider re-introducing the subsidised shuttle bus to transport prisoners' visitors from the railway station to the establishment (paragraph 5.7).

12.35 The Family Contact Development Office should be open during all visit sessions (paragraph 5.10).

12.36 A new visits room is required (paragraph 5.11).

12.37 Telephones should be located in areas which are quieter than the recreation areas (paragraph 5.20).

12.38 Management should examine the reasons for the high number of guilty verdicts in the Orderly Room (paragraph 6.6).

12.39 The severity of punishments awarded in the Orderly Room should be reviewed (paragraph 6.7).

12.40 The regime plan information document for prisoners in the Segregation Unit should be updated and made available to prisoners in the Unit (paragraph 6.18).

12.41 The lack of access to in cell television in the Segregation Unit during patrol periods should be reviewed (paragraph 6.19).

12.42 The segregation should be used only as a last resort for new admissions when overcrowding is at a critical level (paragraph 6.20).

12.43 Opportunities for Continuous Professional Development for learning centre staff should be systematic and comprehensive (paragraph 7.2).

12.44 There are insufficient linkages between and across all staff involved in learning, skills and employability (paragraph 7.2).

12.45 College staff delivery education programmes should have access to a wide enough range of resources to support the different levels of ability within class groups (paragraph 7.2).

12.46 In general purpose classrooms, the standard of ICT equipment to support learning and teaching should be improved (paragraph 7.2).

12.47 Arrangements for learning centre staff to identify and access training on diversity and inclusive learning approaches should be systematic (paragraph 7.2).

12.48 Improved methods for communicating learning opportunities to prisoners should be considered (paragraph 7.5).

12.49 Learning plans should be made available to each member of staff working with an individual (paragraph 7.6).

12.50 Formal links should be established between staff involved in workshops or PE and those in the Learning Centre to identify and support prisoners' needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy (paragraph 7.6).

12.51 Arrangements should be put in place to collate information from schools or other previous learning providers to inform learning requirements (paragraph 7.6).

12.52 The planning of learning activities should take account of the potential for contextualising core skills within vocational activities (paragraph 7.7).

12.53 A coherent strategic vision for Learning Skills and Employability should be developed (paragraph 7.10).

12.54 College delivery staff should be able to access Individual Learning Plans and contribute to learner reviews (paragraph 7.11).

12.55 Overlap in the provision of services to prisoners with addiction problems should be avoided (paragraph 8.20).

12.56 Internal service providers involved with a prisoner should be invited to attend relevant Integrated Case Management Case Conferences (paragraph 9.2).

12.57 Community based social workers should attend more ICM Case Conferences (paragraph 9.6).

12.58 The ICM Case Conferences should be needs rather than service led (paragraph 9.6).

12.59 ICM files should be consistent in layout and content (paragraph 9.8).

12.60 Ways in which the most positive aspects of the Positive Parenting programme can still be made available to young fathers should be explored (paragraph 9.19).

12.61 Access to visit entitlements for prisoners subject to the Basic level of the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme should be reviewed (paragraph 9.25).

12.62 The 'Partners Forum' should be formalised and meetings minutes (paragraph 9.32).

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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