



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

Report on

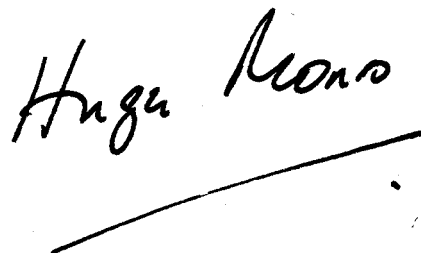
HMP & YOI Cornton Vale

**FULL INSPECTION
21-29 SEPTEMBER 2009**

The Scottish Ministers

In accordance with my terms of reference as Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, I forward a report of a full inspection carried out at HMP & YOI Cornton Vale between 21-29 September 2009.

Twenty two recommendations and a number of other points for action are made.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hugh Monro". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid black horizontal line.

HUGH MONRO
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
20 November 2009

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KEY FACTS

Location

Cornton Vale is located between Stirling and Bridge of Allan in Central Scotland.

Role

Cornton Vale is Scotland's national establishment for female prisoners. It holds all categories of women, including young offenders, women on remand and convicted prisoners. A small number of women are also currently being held in a hall in HMP Greenock as a result of overcrowding in Cornton Vale.

History

The establishment opened in 1975 for convicted young offenders and adults. Since 1978 it has also held women on remand. Mothers are also able to keep their babies in a unit within the prison. The establishment has had a troubled history, with a number of prisoners committing suicide over the years. However, there have been no suicides in the last four years.

Design Capacity

375

Population on first day of inspection

399

Accommodation

There are six house blocks within the perimeter and an Independent Living Unit outside. The Independent Living Unit houses prisoners who are nearing the end of their sentence and are preparing for release. The house blocks are divided into units to allow for the separation of different categories of prisoner.

Last Inspected

Follow up inspection	March 2007
Full inspection	May 2006

1. PREAMBLE

1.1 The number of women being sent to Cornton Vale continues to increase, despite repeated calls for that number to decrease. Strategies were suggested in 1998 to limit the population to 100. During an inspection in 2006 the population of Cornton Vale was 326. That number was thought to be too high at that time. On the first day of this inspection the number was 399 (see paragraph 2.4). High numbers of prisoners at Cornton Vale have become endemic and have a negative effect on staff and prisoners alike. Cornton Vale is in a state of crisis and an ever increasing prisoner population is one of the main causes; indeed many of the criticisms I have are directly related to this situation. Ever increasing numbers mean ever increasing problems. I commend the efforts of the prison staff to cope with this serious situation.

1.2 In general I find that Cornton Vale is not performing to a satisfactory standard and falls short in the provision of adequate conditions and treatment for prisoners and young offenders. This report specifies which issues require attention and action. Importantly, there are also areas of good practice which are highlighted.

1.3 Except for Wallace, Ross and Skye Houses, the conditions in which most of the women live are unacceptable. Opportunities for work and education are insufficient, causing long periods when young offenders and prisoners are 'locked up'. This situation is particularly bad for prisoners and young women on remand and at weekends. Access to toilets within the house blocks with electronic unlock is strictly controlled with the result that women may have to wait for long periods of time before they are released to go to the toilet. Access to toilets, described at paragraphs 2.34 to 2.37, is unacceptable and is made so because the system was designed for single, not double, occupancy. This issue, a direct consequence of high numbers, must be addressed: alternative processes, staffing and facilities should be implemented as soon as possible. I also have other general concerns: the quality of the food at the point of dining is poor (paragraph 2.46); the fabric of the whole estate has an unkempt and run down feel (paragraph 2.1); the health centre is not fit for purpose (paragraph 8.2).

1.4 Why has this unsatisfactory situation arisen? I have already mentioned the pressures created by high numbers. It also seems to me that Cornton Vale is 'drifting'. It lacks a sense of purpose from the highest levels. As an example of this, the current Governor, who has only been in post for a few months is the third Governor in 14 months. The senior managers in the prison are over-stretched and have too many responsibilities. Scotland's national facility for female prisoners is suffering from a lack of strategic attention: this establishment needs stability in senior management. The issues affecting the population that the staff face are uniquely complex and challenging, yet Cornton Vale appears to lack the special priority that it needs in terms of staffing and resourcing. **It is my first recommendation that female prisoners should have a focus at SPS Board level, with a view to setting the agenda for the future and ensuring such an agenda is implemented quickly and with purpose.** This report makes specific recommendations about how this establishment could be quickly and efficiently turned round.

1.5 Much good work *is* being carried out at Cornton Vale. Most importantly I am clear that it is a safe prison. The staff are acutely aware of the need for safety and I can see a number of initiatives to deal with prisoners with very complex needs.

1.6 There are other positive areas where this prison is setting good practice (chapter 10). Amongst these are the following:

- I have been impressed by the efforts to maintain contact with the families of prisoners. The work of the Family Contact Officers is very heartening.
- There are excellent links with community-based organisations to help prisoners re-integrate back into the community.
- Many of the staff are performing very well in difficult conditions and circumstances. I highlight both the Links Centre staff who make particular efforts to communicate positively with prisoners and the outside agencies and the Addictions staff who are dealing with a challenging situation effectively.

- The use of Peer Tutors and Listeners.

1.7 Existence at Cornton Vale for prisoners and young women on remand is dull and lacking in purpose. Indeed, the remand prisoners with the most worrying experience are those travelling from Cornton Vale to some of the more distant courts (paragraphs 3.6 to 3.10). Prisoners awaiting trial at courts in the North, the Islands and Stranraer will have to undertake road journeys of at least three hours and possibly longer. Because there are no local overnight facilities for female prisoners, females going to court will have to make these journeys on a daily basis during trial. The round trip from Cornton Vale to, for example, Inverness Sherriff Court and back will take a minimum of over seven hours, daily. The implications of a lack of a proper breakfast prior to travel, lack of methadone if prescribed, lack of reading material during the journey and lack of a hot meal on return are described in this report. **I recommend, at paragraph 3.8, alternatives to this arrangement which should be implemented immediately.**

1.8 My predecessor, in his 2006 report, commented on the perceived boredom in the evening. He also commented that this state of mind could be due to the long periods of time which some prisoners spend locked in their cells both in the evening and sometimes during the day. But he did report signs of progress. The situation, as I now see it, has deteriorated. The balance between activities, including education and work and the periods when prisoners are locked in cells is heavily skewed towards the latter (paragraph 7.1). This is partly due to a lack of resources and staff to escort prisoners to activities, and partly due to the fact that the capacity of the services provided by the prison was not increased when numbers increased, particularly when Wallace House was opened.

1.9 Indeed some opportunities have disappeared altogether. I find it somewhat surprising that in a female prison there is no access to ‘proper gardening’ (as opposed to grass cutting), or training women how to cook. The former would be easy and relatively cheap to introduce and would be excellent, therapeutic and productive work. The latter would be invaluable education: to teach a core family-bonding skill, to teach basic arithmetic in terms of weights/measures/costs etc, and to enhance self esteem. Is it not ironic that many men in prison have such a facility, yet the women in

Cornton Vale, in great need of such education, do not? My concern is that too many prisoners, particularly those on remand, spend far, far too long locked in cells and not in gainful activity. I quote from Andrew McLellan's 2006, Cornton Vale Report: *"For a remand prisoner, addicted, mentally ill, frightened and separated from her family, time locked in her cell may not only be boring: it may be very threatening."* This situation has not improved since 2006, indeed it has become worse. Activity at weekends is particularly limited (paragraph 2.41). This is another reason why I have recommended that a better focus on female prisoners is represented at Board level. This poor 'activities versus lock up' balance simply cannot go on.

1.10 The population of Cornton Vale seems to be in a permanent state of 'musical chairs', being moved on a regular basis, from house block to house block, for a number of reasons: the main reason being to allow new admissions to be held in cells where the locking/unlocking is controlled by staff. This 'churn', described at paragraphs 3.28 to 3.33, is extremely unsettling.

1.11 Prisoners who need to be held out of normal association, have to be held in either Ross House, Younger House or Bruce House alongside the other prisoners there. The management of the prisoners in these house blocks causes complications for the staff and, by implication, other prisoners. At the same time, some vulnerable women are being held in four separate cells in Ross House, known as the "back cells". For reasons explained at paragraphs 2.12, 3.37 and 6.21-6.22, these cells are totally inappropriate for this purpose or indeed for use as a segregation unit. The use of the "back cells" should be discontinued. The provision of a purpose built unit to hold prisoners out of normal circulation would go a long way to solving the day-to-day issues of prisoner management (paragraphs 6.16-6.28).

1.12 I noted a small, but not insignificant, number of prisoners (14 at the time of inspection) unable to speak English (paragraph 4.19). I observed an Integrated Case Management meeting for a prisoner from South America. Fortunately, her Personal Officer could speak excellent Spanish, an example of where prison officers provide something extra. For those who are unable to speak English, prison can be an especially confusing experience. This is an issue that is likely to become increasingly common. Whilst there are translation facilities available these are expensive and not

necessarily timely. **I recommend that the SPS begin a programme to encourage prison officers in all prisons to learn different languages with the aim of providing an ever-growing pool of such staff available (paragraph 4.20).**

1.13 I have made positive comment about some excellent family contact initiatives (paragraphs 5.1 to 5.7). Nevertheless, Cornton Vale, as a national resource, needs a Visitor Centre to help cope with visitors from all over Scotland (paragraph 5.9). The aim should be not only to improve a very poor visit room, but also to provide more wide-ranging facilities for families, including better access for disabled prisoners and visitors. Continued emphasis on family inclusion may eventually bear fruit in improved family involvement in the Integrated Case Management process, as well as re-integrating women more successfully in to communities.

1.14 In summary, much needs to be addressed at HMP & YOI Cornton Vale in order to provide sufficiently good conditions and treatment of prisoners. Only by achieving this will offending behaviour be satisfactorily addressed.

2. CONDITIONS

Outcome

Prisoners are held in conditions that provide the basic necessities of life and health, including adequate air, light, water, exercise in the fresh air, food, bedding and clothing.

2.1 The basic necessities are not provided to all prisoners to an adequate standard. The standard of food, bedding, toilets and showers in the older house blocks in particular is unsatisfactory. The quality of the facilities for exercise and time in the open air is poor. The conditions in which most of the women live are unacceptable. The fabric of the estate looks and feels run down.

Population

2.2 Cornton Vale is a national facility for all categories of female prisoner. It has a “design capacity” of 375. On the first day of inspection 399 prisoners were being held (with another 10 at court and two on short home leave):

Adult – Convicted	239
Adult - Remand	116
Under 21 – Convicted	29
Under 21 – Remand	11
Immigration Detainees	4

2.3 Two babies were living with their mothers, one in the Mother and Baby Unit and one in the Independent Living Unit.

2.4 Although the official design capacity is 375 there are only 258 cells within the perimeter fence, with a further 18 rooms available in the Independent Living Unit, giving a total of 276 rooms. The majority of cells are designed for single occupancy with some designed to hold either two or three prisoners. With a population currently hovering around 400, this means that there are more than 100 prisoners than there are cells. Double occupancy in single cells, problems with access to toilets in two blocks,

and the fact that additional resources and services were not provided when numbers started to rise, particularly when Wallace House opened in 2005, means that Cornton Vale is struggling to cope with the needs of prisoners. The establishment is overcrowded. Ever increasing numbers mean ever increasing problems.

Accommodation Areas

2.5 Cornton Vale has six residential units within the perimeter and six houses outside the perimeter providing independent living accommodation.

Wallace House

2.6 Wallace House is relatively new accommodation which opened in 2005. It houses convicted prisoners who have been assessed as requiring medium supervision. Wallace consists of three wings with 51 rooms. Each room is well equipped with a toilet and a shower; a wardrobe with two lockable sections; and a storage unit with drawers and a desk top. All rooms have electric power. Most rooms have bunk beds and regularly hold two prisoners. The cells are sufficiently spacious and airy to cope with this situation. Prisoners have keys to their own rooms. During the night the alarm system is linked to the central control room via an intercom panel in each room. In the event of an emergency the unit has a “self evacuating” facility. The Inspectorate was assured that every prisoner was made aware of emergency procedures.

2.7 Wallace has a central communal dining area, with a servery. The dining area is used as an association area during recreation. A second communal room is also used as a recreation area and a visit room for selected prisoners. These areas are clean and of good quality. Telephones are situated in the communal area.

2.8 Overall, the conditions in Wallace House are good.

Ross House

2.9 Ross House is modern accommodation with an open design. It houses adult women on remand, and also vulnerable prisoners. Ross has in cell toilet facilities. It provides a relaxed atmosphere for prisoners while still allowing staff good sightlines in the accommodation areas. However, the four recreation areas are tucked away out of sight of hall staff. *Although CCTV is fitted in these areas, Ross House staff should supervise such potentially vulnerable prisoners at all times.*

2.10 There are 33 cells in Ross and there are usually two or three women living in each cell. High numbers are most obvious in Ross, and put pressure on existing resources, particularly when the “back cells” are being used (see paragraph 2.12). When bunk beds are fitted there are appropriate ladders and guard rails attached.

2.11 Five cells are used for women at risk of self harming. There are also two anti-ligature cells. Combined, these seven cells are useful and well managed facilities.

2.12 A further four cells are variously referred to as the “management suite” or “back cells”. They are located in a corner of the building, separate from the main area. The cells are used to house the most vulnerable women but are simply not equipped to do that. Conditions in these four cells are unacceptable. **It is recommended that the use of the “back cells” in Ross House is discontinued immediately and more appropriate accommodation is used for the most vulnerable women.**

2.13 The arrangements for making external telephone calls and for dining in association are good.

2.14 Overall, the fabric of Ross House is good although the conditions in the back cells are extremely poor.

Skye House

2.15 Skye House has been renovated following a fire, and is now used as a national “top-end” for life sentence and long-term prisoners nearing liberation. It has four

units each with seven rooms. This offers mostly single cell accommodation. However, there are three double rooms where prisoners live when first admitted to the unit. Rooms are furnished and decorated to a good standard. There is a wash-hand basin and electric power in each room. There are no toilets within the rooms but prisoners have keys to their rooms and can access toilets at any time. Each section has two toilets, a bath and a shower. There are full length doors offering good privacy.

2.16 Prisoners have reasonable access to telephones and there is a good sitting area in each section. The arrangements for dining are very good.

2.17 Overall, the fabric of Skye House is good and Skye provides a very good living environment, which is well up to standard.

Peebles House

2.18 Peebles House is one of the original units. It accommodates medium and low risk prisoners and the mother and baby unit. Peebles has eight units, each with seven rooms. Each unit has a communal area with a toilet, shower and bath. *The arrangements for maintaining privacy when prisoners are using this facility are wholly inadequate and should be improved.*

2.19 Each room has a wash-hand basin, a wardrobe and a work top unit. There are no toilets in the rooms, but prisoners have their own door keys and have access to the toilet at all times. Most of the rooms are fitted with bunk beds and regularly hold two prisoners. Although this situation would be acceptable on occasion, it has now become routine and can lead to overcrowding issues such as friction between staff and prisoners. Prisoners have keys to their rooms which allows them to access the toilet within the secure unit during the night. Much of the furniture is broken and the rooms are dingy and cramped when shared. The paintwork throughout the unit is poor and there is a claustrophobic feeling generally. One of the units provides accommodation for mothers and babies (see paragraphs 5.16-5.21). **It is recommended that the conditions in Peebles House are improved.**

2.20 *There are sufficient telephones, although most do not have a hood and prisoners have difficulty holding a private conversation due to the background noise. There are no notices informing prisoners that calls are recorded. These issues should be addressed.*

2.21 Meals are served from a servery and each unit has a small dining area.

2.22 Overall, the fabric of Peebles House is poor and conditions are not good.

Bruce House

2.23 Bruce House holds convicted young offenders and convicted adult prisoners. There are two discrete units for the convicted young offenders and they are generally kept separate from the adults. *Every effort should be made to keep adult prisoners and young offenders separate.* Bruce has eight units in all, with seven rooms in each unit. Each unit has a communal toilet, bath and shower. Access to toilets is via electronic unlock (see paragraphs 2.34-2.37). *The screens in the ablutions areas are not adequate and should be replaced.*

2.24 Each room has a sink, a wardrobe and a work top, but no toilet. A number of rooms are fitted with bunk beds and these have ladders and safety rails. Much of the fabric and furniture in the rooms is dirty and/or broken, and the rooms become cramped when shared. The whole house block requires redecorating as it is dark and dismal. **It is recommended that the conditions in Bruce House are improved.**

2.25 There are four telephones. None of the telephones have hoods which makes conversations difficult given the amount of background noise. *This should be addressed.* There are no notices to explain that calls are preceded by a recorded message. *This should be addressed.*

2.26 Meals are served from a servery in one of the units but, because all prisoners have to take food back to their own unit, hot food often cools down before it can be eaten. All prisoners eat in their own unit's dining area.

2.27 Overall, the fabric of Bruce House is poor and conditions are not good.

Younger House

2.28 Younger House is one of the older style blocks. It houses remand prisoners, which includes both young offenders and adults. It has 41 rooms which are often used to accommodate two or three prisoners. The YOs and adults share the units, but not usually a room. *Every effort should be made to keep adult prisoners and young offenders separate.* Each unit has a communal area with a toilet shower and bath. Access to toilets is via electronic unlock (see paragraphs 2.34-2.37). *The arrangements for maintaining privacy when prisoners are using this facility are wholly inadequate and should be improved.* The house block feels claustrophobic and the paintwork is in a poor condition throughout. **It is recommended that the conditions in Younger House are improved.**

2.29 There are only two telephones in Younger which makes it difficult for prisoners to contact family and friends at times when members are high. *Additional telephones should be installed.*

2.30 As with the other older blocks food is served from a central servery and is often cold when taken back to the units.

2.31 Overall, the fabric of Younger House is poor and conditions are not good.

Independent Living Unit

2.32 The Independent Living Unit comprises six semi-detached houses outside the prison. It equates to the Open Estate, and houses prisoners who are nearing the end of their sentence and are preparing for release. Five of the houses offer accommodation for four prisoners and one for three. The accommodation was clean and in good condition when inspected. There is a telephone in each house which gives the women direct access to a member of prison staff. There is also a pay 'phone for outgoing calls in each house.

2.33 *There seems to be a problem in getting repairs carried out. The procedures for reporting faults and responding to these should be reviewed.*

Access to Toilets

2.34 Only two of the house blocks have in-cell toilet facilities: Ross House and Wallace House. Prisoners in Peebles and Skye have their own door keys and have access to the toilet at all times. Where prisoners have their own keys there is no limit to the number of rooms in each unit which can be unlocked at any one time.

2.35 Electronic unlock occurs in Bruce and Younger, where accessing a toilet remains a major issue. Electronic unlock is most effective when all rooms have only one prisoner in them. In such a situation the system can operate in a 'semi-automatic' mode with each prisoner requesting access to the toilet being held in a queue. They are allowed out one at a time in each unit. In this semi-automatic mode the prison can set a maximum time for each door to be unlocked. Doors are locked by the prisoner pressing a button on the control panel within the cell on return. The next cell in the queue in the unit is then automatically unlocked. Although not ideal with single prisoner occupancy, the automatic unlock system should meet satisfactory standards of access during the day and at night.

2.36 The major problem with the system is the mixture of single and double occupancy rooms in each house block and often in each unit. The majority of rooms are double occupancy and they have to be excluded from the semi-automatic system because only one prisoner is allowed out at a time. Prisoners in these rooms have to request access to the toilet via a control panel in their room to staff in a central control room. Once a request is made the system is switched to manual control and staff electronically unlock the door and then watch via CCTV that both prisoners return to the room before the request to re-lock. Staff are able to watch only one unit at a time in each house block. Prisoners in single rooms must wait until staff have dealt with requests from the double occupancy rooms and returned the system to semi-automatic mode. This system is complicated and relies on the patience of staff to make it work.

2.37 Double occupancy significantly slows up the system and this leads to frustration amongst prisoners waiting in the queue. It has been reported that on occasion prisoners and YOs have to wait up to two hours. Many claim that they are unable to wait that amount of time and are consequently forced to use their sinks as toilets. In a male prison such a situation would be unsatisfactory. For women (and particularly young offenders) the electronic unlock system, as described, is unacceptable. **It is recommended that as a matter of priority, alternative systems to access toilets in Bruce and Younger Houses are installed. In the meantime, it is recommended that all prisoners are able to access a toilet within a reasonable time.**

Exercise Areas

2.38 Prisoners have access to exercise and time in the open air every day. However, the facilities for this access are poor. The exercise areas are of varying design but all have picnic tables and/or chairs. The exercise areas for Peebles and Bruce YOs are not suitable due to a lack of space and unsuitable fencing. Younger, Wallace and Ross have areas which are pleasant but are not able to cater for the high number of prisoners being held. The Skye exercise area is very good. However, all exercise areas are unkempt and need basic maintenance such as clearing weeds.

2.39 There is an exercise area for mothers and babies in Peebles but this is not used as the surfaces are uneven and unsafe. As a result they use the main area but are told to keep away from the other prisoners.

2.40 It is recommended that outdoor exercise areas are improved and maintained.

Weekend Routines

2.41 There is very little activity available to prisoners at weekends. They are bored and many are locked up for significant periods of time. Sometimes they are locked up to allow staff to deal with prisoners who are removed from normal circulation. Where remand and convicted prisoners are held together, one group has to be locked up to

allow the other association time. Inspectors observed two separate floors being locked up to allow one young offender being held in segregation on the lower floor to have a shower. The areas locked up were ones where it was also difficult to access a toilet.

2.42 Only Wallace, Ross and Skye have a recreation area. Prisoners in the other house blocks tend to congregate in cells during association because there is no other facility available.

2.43 The gymnasium is only open until 14.00hrs at the weekend. Visits are available in both the morning and afternoon. High quality mother and child bonding visits are also available for selected prisoners. Church services are also available although the timing of these is somewhat unpredictable (see paragraph 6.7).

2.44 Lunch time meals leave the kitchen at 11.30hrs and the evening meals leave shortly after 16.30hrs. *Meals should be served later.* The quantity of the food available is mixed. At lunch time on the Saturday inspected only a filled roll and small carton of orange juice was available. The evening meal was more substantial, but nevertheless *the amount of food available on Saturdays should be increased.* Sunday lunch was a hot meal accompanied by a yoghurt. Prisoners can also ask for bread, but there is no spread to put on it. In some areas prisoners are not provided with a spoon to eat their yoghurt. Prisoners often said that they were hungry during the night at weekends. **It is recommended that the regime and the arrangements for catering are improved at the weekend.**

Catering

2.45 The kitchen is clean and all staff and prisoners wear appropriate clothing. The kitchen employs 20 prisoners, with ten working on each shift. Prisoners are currently unable to achieve a qualification in catering, because staff are not available to provide it.

2.46 The arrangements for the preparation of food are very good. Food is then put into heated trolleys and transported to the halls. The quality of the food is good at the

point of cooking but deteriorates significantly during transportation to the point of dining in the halls. *The standard of food at the point of dining should be improved.*

2.47 There is a three-week rolling menu in place. This caters for vegetarians and faith requirements. All special diets are identified and met. A choice of fruit is available for most meals and prisoners can choose to have five pieces of fruit or vegetables on most days. All prisoners, including remand prisoners can make menu choices in advance. There is some consultation with prisoners about food, and the most common comment is that portions are too small.

2.48 The timing of meals during the week is good with evening meals being served after 17.00hrs everyday. There is a lack of cutlery in some areas, and staff seem to expect prisoners to know that they should ask for cutlery. *Sufficient cutlery should be issued to prisoners as a matter of course.* Arrangements at the weekend are not so good and are described at paragraph 2.44.

2.49 There is little evidence of senior managers tasting the food in the kitchen and none at the places where it is served. *Senior managers should record when they taste food in the kitchen and at the places where it is served.*

Canteen

2.50 The canteen operates a 'bag and tag' system. There is only a small stock room and this dictates the range of items for sale and the frequency of purchases. *A full range of toiletries for women should be available,* regardless of the limited space available. Greeting cards are available and prisoners can also visit the cards workshop to purchase hand made cards.

2.51 Remand prisoners access the canteen three times a week, convicted prisoners access it once a week with differing days for each house blocks. Prisoners also have the opportunity to buy fruit and other sundry goods. Feedback from prisoners suggests that mistakes in the bag and tag system are common but are usually dealt with quickly by staff.

Clothing and Laundry

2.52 Prisoners wear a range of prison and personal clothing. Prison clothing is in good condition with different colours used to identify different house blocks. The prisoners in Skye are issued with good quality coats which can act as a motivation for achieving, and keeping, “top-end” status.

2.53 The laundry provides work for 26 prisoners and the atmosphere is good. Prisoners’ clothes can be cleaned every second day. There is however a shortage of individual laundry bags which sometimes results in prisoners sharing or overfilling the bags available. When bags are overfilled the clothes are often damp when returned. *The shortage of laundry bags and the problem of bags being overfilled should be addressed.*

3. SAFETY

Outcome

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that individual prisoners are protected from harm by themselves and others.

3.1 The prison is acutely conscious of safety and has a number of initiatives in place to prevent prisoners harming themselves and others.

Escapes, Absconds and Physical Security

3.2 There have been no escapes since the last inspection. Appropriate security arrangements are in place for the women living in the Independent Living Unit.

Violence

3.3 Prisoners report feeling safe. There were two serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and 49 minor assaults in 2008-09. There has been no serious assault and 34 minor assaults in the year 2009-10 to time of inspection. These need to be viewed in the context of overcrowding. Acts of violence tend to be reactive rather than premeditated.

3.4 The prison has a Multi Disciplinary Anti-Violence Strategy Group in place. This has only recently been established and is designed to achieve a reduction in violence by adopting a zero tolerance approach to all acts of aggression, including verbal abuse. The early signs are good.

Supervision Levels

3.5 Due to the nature of the population, the number of supervision level allocations and reviews can vary quite considerably from week to week. All of the processes inspected were performed to a high standard. Prisoners are kept informed

about every stage of the process. They are involved in decision making case conferences, and always sign to agree the review paperwork.

Escort Handover Procedures

3.6 Cornton Vale is the only prison which admits prisoners directly from all courts in Scotland. This means that many women have to travel much greater distances to and from courts than male prisoners. The distance issue means that Cornton Vale requires early unlock procedures, with night duty staff sometimes having to prepare prisoners to leave the establishment before 06:00hrs. Some women face a journey of almost four hours each way to northern or island courts. If the trial lasts several days a woman would make that journey on a daily basis, unlike male prisoners who can be transferred temporarily to a prison nearer the court.

3.7 Most prisoners who are due to leave early for court are given their cereal and milk the night before. There are no ways to keep the milk fresh especially in the summer time and many drink it before they go to bed. Prisoners do not always get the opportunity to shower on the morning of a court appearance. They are also not given their methadone before they leave. This may cause problems for prisoners who are liberated from court late in the day and are not able to access a community provider.

3.8 Prisoners who have to undertake long journeys to courts are not allowed any reading materials. This, along with the fact that they do not receive their methadone and are not allowed to smoke makes journeys extremely uncomfortable - particularly when they may not return to the prison until 20.00hrs. **It is recommended that arrangements are put in place which allow women to be held in custody nearer the court at which they are appearing, if significant travel from Cornton Vale is involved or that greater use is made of court video link facilities. In the meantime it is recommended that women travelling to court are offered the opportunity to shower prior to travel; are given a proper breakfast prior to travel; receive their methadone dose prior to travel; are allowed reading materials during travel; and have a hot meal on return.**

3.9 All of the escort vehicles inspected were clean. They also had food and hygiene packs. Not all had drinking water. *All escort vehicles should have drinking water on board.* All vehicles had a safety message which escort staff said they played before each journey. Most prisoners spoken to had not heard this safety message. *The safety message on escort vehicles should always be played, and heard by prisoners, before the journey starts.*

3.10 The quality of the information recorded on the Personal Escort Record was good. Prison staff also reported that there was usually a good flow of information between escort staff and the prison reception staff regarding anticipated admissions. All prisoners spoken to reported being well treated by escort staff.

Reception

3.11 The reception has two large holding rooms opposite the staff workstation. The rooms have transparent fronts providing staff with excellent sight lines for supervision. Suicide risk assessment is conducted in a private interview room. Searches are undertaken in one of two search rooms and a metal detector is located in a small room.

3.12 Property is held in two rack rooms and valuable property and money are safely stored. There is a room for confidential nurse admission interviews.

Admission Procedures

3.13 On admission, a prisoner is identified in the presence of escort staff and placed in one of the holding rooms. She is then searched, given the opportunity to have a shower and placed in the other holding room. The holding rooms have bench seating around the wall and a notice board with a limited number of notices. A TV is available in the one of the holding rooms. *There is no admission information played on the TV. This should be addressed.*

3.14 Prisoners then have an admission health screen interview and a suicide risk assessment. They also have personal details added to the computer and check and sign for property and cash.

3.15 The prisoner records computer is located on the staff workstation. The prisoner sits on one side of the desk and gives her personal details to the officer on the other side. This will often happen with another prisoner sitting beside her while another officer is checking that prisoner's property and cash. This does not allow for the confidential provision of personal information. *Prisoners should not be required to give personal information in the presence of others.* The nurse health-screen interviews and suicide risk assessments are conducted in private.

3.16 Cash and property is opened and checked in the presence of the prisoner. At the weekend the duty manager conducts random property checks in reception. This is an area of **good practice**.

3.17 Prisoners are allowed to retain their own clothing and footwear if it is suitable. They are given two sets of underwear and two pairs of socks, all of which are new. This is an area of **good practice**.

3.18 Prisoners who arrive in Cornton Vale late in the afternoon will not be in the house blocks in time to receive a hot meal, and instead they will receive a filled roll or a sandwich. Some will have travelled for more than three hours and since breakfast will only have received a packed lunch consisting of a sandwich, a packet of crisps and a biscuit. *The food available to prisoners arriving at Cornton Vale too late for the evening meal should be reviewed.*

3.19 A language identification notice is on display in reception. If a non-English speaking prisoner is admitted, the telephone interpreting service is contacted. However, Reception staff do not access this service as a matter of course. Instead the prisoner is taken to one of the house blocks where a nurse and a residential officer address admission and first night issues via the interpreter. *The telephone interpreting service should be accessed by staff in reception, (see also Recommendation 11.2).*

3.20 All new prisoners are given a telephone account with a 30p credit to permit a call to family. Many women come into prison still having responsibility as the main carer for the family and there are often immediate needs to attend to. The 30p credit barely allows time to let family know where they are and most of the calls made are not local (see also paragraph 5.13). *Prisoners should be given a telephone credit on admission which meets their immediate needs.*

3.21 Reception staff have a range of admission packs available to remand prisoners with money or convicted prisoners serving over fourteen days. The packs contain smoking materials, sweets or toiletries.

First Night Procedures

3.22 There is no dedicated first night centre in Cornton Vale. Prisoners are admitted to Ross, Bruce or Younger House depending on status or need. Prisoners who are subject to ACT2Care procedures are located in Ross House. Residential staff meet with every new admission and take them through a structured first night process which includes how to arrange visits; how the telephone system works; and how to purchase items from the canteen. An immediate needs assessment is also conducted and subsequent referrals made for the following day. The prisoner supervision assessment is also conducted.

3.23 When prisoners are admitted into a dedicated first night centre staff do not have to deal with the range of other prisoner issues happening around them. Most First Night Centres have a calm and supportive environment and women coming into Cornton Vale would benefit from this. **It is recommended that a purpose built First Night Centre is created.**

Induction Procedures

3.24 After the first night, a modular induction programme is used. The core screen is completed in the Links Centre the day after admission. Module 1 is then delivered by peer supporters to all prisoners and covers the requirements in the core SPS induction model. This is delivered within three days of admission. It seems to work

well as most of the women struggle to concentrate during the first day or so as they try to stabilise addictions issues. A translator is brought in if required.

3.25 There is a well structured approach to delivering induction for convicted prisoners serving over 30 days. Every Tuesday Module 2 is delivered to the admissions from the previous week. This covers important areas that need to be understood early in a sentence. Module 3 is the national induction programme. This is delivered over five full days, Monday to Friday, usually after a full week has passed since admission. This is delivered by the various agencies who deliver interventions and services.

3.26 *There is no input from senior managers to the induction programme. This should be addressed.* A family induction session is offered to families of newly convicted prisoners. There are well produced information booklets: one for remands and one for convicted prisoners.

3.27 Induction is an area of **good practice**.

Progression

3.28 Prisoners move around the establishment on a regular basis. There are, on average, 300 moves within the prison each week, and this is extremely unsettling for prisoners and staff alike. This “churn” is created partly by the fact that there are three house blocks where prisoners do not have keys to their rooms. As a result, prisoners are often moved to other house blocks to allow new admissions to be held in cells where the locking/unlocking is controlled by staff (see paragraphs 2.34-2.37).

3.29 The preferred progression system for convicted prisoners would be from Bruce to Peebles to Wallace to Skye to the Independent Living Unit. However prisoners are very reluctant to move from Bruce to Peebles. This often results in disciplinary procedures being initiated. This is despite the fact that there is a policy of no “forced” moves.

3.30 Overcrowding makes “progression” for convicted prisoners feel like a number juggling task – a task which is a daily grind. An added element to this is that the skills of staff might not always match the needs of the prisoners they are working with. The mix of prisoners, particularly when young offenders are sharing with adults, is not always right or appropriate.

3.31 Progression of young offenders in Ross and Younger is from the regime on the bottom floor to a more relaxed regime on the top floor. In reality, there is little difference.

3.32 There is no progression for prisoners on remand.

3.33 It is recommended that the internal progression system is improved and that prisoners are not moved around the establishment as often as they are.

Suicide Risk Management

3.34 There have been no suicides since the last full inspection in March 2006.

3.35 There are approximately thirty new ACT2Care cases opened each month, and an average of thirty case conferences per week. This far exceeds the number in the busiest male establishment in Scotland. Eighty six per cent of staff had completed the core competency training for the ACT2Care process against a target of 90-95%. Extra training is being provided to address this.

3.36 Multi-disciplinary case conferences are well attended and take place within the correct timescales. When a case is opened, paperwork indicates that there is a standard approach to care namely, “safe clothing and location in a safer cell”. *Suicide risk care plans should be based on individual risk and need.*

3.37 There are five safer cells and two anti-ligature cells within the main area of Ross House (see paragraph 2.10). There are also four cells in a separate annex of that hall (the ‘Back Cells’). **The cells in the annex of Ross House, as described at paragraphs 2.12 and 6.21-6.22 in this report are not fit for purpose and their use**

should be discontinued immediately. There is a strong link between ACT2Care and the Multi-Disciplinary Mental Health Team (MDMHT).

3.38 There is no structured day care facility for ACT2Care prisoners. Although there is an opportunity for 'ad hoc' activities the regime for prisoners subject to ACT2Care procedures is impoverished and lacking stimulation. It was disappointing to note that a well appointed multi-sensory room had hardly been used since it was installed several years ago. *Staff should be trained and the multi-sensory room should be used as a matter of course.*

3.39 According to policy, the local Suicide Risk Management Group (SRMG) should meet at least once every quarter. However, records indicate that it has not met since March 2009. **It is recommended that the Suicide Risk Management Group is reinvigorated.**

3.40 There is a Listener Scheme in operation, with seven Listeners. The Listeners are trained by, and have positive links with, the local Samaritans group. The Listeners are prisoners who provide support to other prisoners who may be vulnerable. It is a challenge to keep the number of Listeners at an optimum working level, because the Listeners will often be those prisoners who are candidates for a Home Detention Curfew or transfer to the Independent Living Units.

3.41 The facilities for Listeners meeting prisoners in the house blocks are not good. If there are two or three prisoners in a room the others are asked to leave. *Appropriate meeting rooms should be available in each house block. There is a lack of notices around the establishment highlighting the Listener Scheme. This should be addressed.*

3.42 *Listeners also reported that when they go into some house blocks to see a prisoner the staff will often shout the prisoner's name and that a Listener is in to see them. This practice should stop.*

Night Duty

3.43 A folder with night shift orders and emergency procedures is available to the night manager and a copy is available in the Electronic Control Room. No night shift orders specific to role are available to patrol staff. On taking up night duty staff located in the house block are provided with a written handover of significant issues. All staff are given a verbal briefing on taking up duty. *A copy of night shift orders specific to role should be available to all night duty staff.*

3.44 The night shift manager and the majority of staff are permanent night duty. All full-time night duty staff are first aid trained. Only one residential area has a staff presence throughout the night. This raised some security issues which were brought to the attention of the Governor. Inspectors were unable to locate a record of senior management visiting during the night. *Senior management should record visits which they make during the night.*

3.45 The arrangements for allowing access to the fire brigade in an emergency at night are very good.

3.46 The night shift staff, particularly those who are full-time are very knowledgeable and experienced in dealing with night shift emergencies.

Staff Training

3.47 The establishment is meeting its targets for the delivery of core competency training, except ACT2Care (which was being addressed).

3.48 The provision of other more targetted training is variable. Local initiatives have been developed and are ready to be delivered but the core requirements and resource constraints take priority. Staff training is driven by the Service Level Agreement and national requirements.

4. RESPECT

Outcomes

Prisoners are treated with respect by prison staff.

4.1 Relationships between prisoners and staff are acceptable.

Prisoners are treated with respect for their dignity while being escorted to and from prison, in prison and while under escort in any location.

4.2 Prisoners are treated well by escort staff. The conditions in Kilmarnock and Glasgow Sheriff Courts are poor.

Relationships

4.3 Relationships between prison staff and prisoners are in general good. In the SPS prisoner survey 95% of prisoners said that they got on well or very well with staff. However, it did appear that some staff in some house blocks were dismissive of prisoners' requests. Staff generally cope extremely well with the challenges of this prisoner population, and always use the prisoner's first name.

4.4 Prisoners are treated well by escort staff and staff in the court cell areas.

Kilmarnock Sheriff Court

4.5 On the day of inspection there were five prisoners from Cornton Vale appearing in Kilmarnock Sheriff Court. They left the prison at approximately 07.30hrs.¹ Once at the court, the unloading bay for the cells is accessed via the police station staff car park. There is very little space to manoeuvre vehicles and if a number of vehicles arrive at the same time they are required to queue up on to the main road to await their turn.

¹ However, prisoners are required to travel to courts across the country and this starting time is often 06.00hrs.

4.6 There are six holding cells with a full grille front. There are no toilets within the holding cells. The two holding cells for women are separate from the men. The smaller cells measure approximately 4 x 3 metres with a wooden bench seat and will often hold nine prisoners. There are not enough seats despite prisoners having to eat lunch there.

4.7 Prisoners' property is held in boxes under a work surface behind the staff desk. This is an area open to many people and is insecure. The property bags supplied by Cornton Vale are not very robust and can be easily burst or opened. The seals used can be removed and re-applied without breaking. *Cornton Vale should review the quality of prisoners' property bags and the method of securing them.*

4.8 There is one male and one female toilet in the cells area. The door to each has a four inch square glass pane. In the female toilet there is a low wall offering inadequate privacy. *These arrangements should be improved.*

4.9 Lunch consisting of a roll or two sandwiches, a packet of crisps and a biscuit is served at 11.30hrs. A hot drink is served with lunch. Drinking water is provided on request throughout the day.

4.10 Most prisoners use a secure passageway from the cells to reach the court rooms. *However, disabled prisoners are required to pass through a public area to reach the court rooms. This should be addressed.*

4.11 The cells and toilet area were clean. Staff were appropriate in their interactions with and response to prisoners.

Glasgow Sheriff Court

4.12 On the day of inspection there were 212 prisoners in Glasgow Sheriff Court, three of whom were from Cornton Vale. The Cornton Vale prisoners left the prison at approximately 08.00hrs. There are five holding cells in a separate area for females. Twenty eight women, including Cornton Vale prisoners and police custodies were

waiting to appear in court. The youngest was 16 and she was held with adult custodies. The Cornton Vale prisoners were held in a separate room from the police custodies.

4.13 There is only one toilet in the female holding area. There is no door to the entrance of the toilet and no privacy screen between the W/C and the doorway. There is a wash-hand basin within the toilet area. *The toilet for female prisoners should offer adequate privacy.*

4.14 *Women making their way to the District Courtroom are required to walk past the male cells and for some this is a distressing experience as they can be subjected to verbal abuse. Alternative arrangements should be found.*

4.15 Once prisoners have been dealt with in court there is often a long wait for paperwork to become available so that escort staff can complete the process. This could be organising transport to prison or release on bail. It was noted by inspectors that some prisoners observed were waiting for more than two and a half hours for paperwork before they were liberated on bail. *Processes should be reviewed in an attempt to reduce the time held in overcrowded holding cells.*

4.16 Prisoners' property is located in cabinets behind the staff desk. This area is open to many people and is insecure. The property bags supplied by Cornton Vale are not very robust and can be easily burst or opened. *Cornton Vale should review the quality of prisoner's property bags and the method of securing them.*

4.17 The area was generally clean prior to the prisoners arriving although many of the cells have a lot of inappropriate graffiti. *This graffiti should be removed.*

4.18 With 212 prisoners the area was noisy, busy and clearly disturbing for vulnerable prisoners. Staff were however courteous and appropriately firm in all their dealings with prisoners.

Equality and Diversity

4.19 At the time of inspection there were 26 black and ethnic minority prisoners in Cornton Vale. Fourteen prisoners were unable to speak English. On admission to the prison a telephone interpreting service can be used to assist in the completion of the admission procedures and risk assessments. However, there is no evidence that this occurs in reception (see paragraph 3.19).

4.20 Some on site interpreters are available to help with the core screen assessment, harm reduction and induction. Provision is made to bring a translator in for the induction presentations if required. *There are no regular reviews with non-English speaking prisoners via an interpreter following induction. This should be addressed.*
It is recommended that SPS encourages uniformed members of staff to become familiar with a foreign language in order to build up a pool of expertise in each prison.

4.21 There have been six racial incidents reported since April 2009 to time of inspection. All incidents were investigated thoroughly and appropriately.

4.22 Foreign national prisoners with no family in the UK are permitted to make a limited number of telephone calls at the prison's expense.

4.23 The fabric and design of the building does not make it easy for wheelchair users to access services. There are no lifts in the house blocks. Access for disabled prisoners and visitors is poor, and because the visits room is up a flight of stairs the main access to visits is restricted and they have to go to other areas for their visits. As a result disabled prisoners and visitors do not have the same access to visits as others. *Access to visits for disabled prisoners and visitors should be improved.*

Searching

4.24 Searching of prisoners is carried out in a respectful manner.

5. CONTACT

Outcome

Good contact with family and friends is maintained.

5.1 A number of good initiatives are in place to ensure that contact with families is maintained. The Family Contact Officer arrangements are excellent. However, the visits room is too small, and has few facilities. The distance which some visitors have to travel makes face-to-face contact difficult.

Family Contact

5.2 The arrangements for maintaining family contact are, in general, good. Three full-time Family Contact Officers (FCOs) are in post. The FCO team have their own office in the Family Centre and their own dedicated telephone number which means that families can call them direct, without the need to go through the switchboard. This is an area of **good practice**.

5.3 All women arriving in Cornton Vale for the first time are seen by the FCOs within 24 hours. All repeat offenders are seen within seven days. During these initial visits the FCOs offer to send an information pack to their families and seven days after sending these they seek permission to telephone the families. Families are invited to come into the prison and attend a family induction session.

5.4 A referral system gives all prisoners access to the FCOs. Referral forms are kept in each residential area and the team aims to see all written referrals within 24 hours. There are also “drop in times” between 18.30hrs and 20.00hrs.

5.5 Two hour mother and child visits are available in the Family Centre (Little Cherubs). These visits are unsupervised and take place every day. Themed events are held and prisoner focus groups are organised. “Access visits” take place for children who are being supervised by social services.

5.6 Prisoners can now receive their letters by email. This is a service provided by a private company. Families email their letters to the company's website where they are reformatted and redirected to the prison. These are sent to the prison in batches and the FCOs print these off first thing in the morning, put them in envelopes and hand them to the prisoners. This is an area of **good practice**.

5.7 The fact that Cornton Vale is a national facility means that many families have to travel long distances to visit. This is time consuming, expensive and often inconvenient and means that face-to-face contact is difficult for some. Flexibility is required to deal with visitors who come from outlying areas, as transport arrangements can be delayed or disrupted.

Visits

5.8 All prisoners receive their visits entitlement, and depending on the circumstances of the visitor and prisoner, and if there are spaces in the visits room, staff will allow more than this entitlement.

5.9 The main visits room is small and cramped. There are no facilities for children and only a vending machine for refreshment. The waiting area is also small. **It is recommended that a purpose built visits facility including a visitor centre as a national resource for Cornton Vale is created.**

5.10 Wallace House has its own visits room, which is also used for other activities.

Information

5.11 Information for visitors is readily available in the waiting room and on notice boards. The FCOs also send out an information pack to all families, if the prisoner has given her permission.

Communications

5.12 There are sufficient telephones available. However, in some areas when the women are unlocked at the same time, there can be a lengthy wait to use the telephone. Most of the telephones do not have hoods and conversations cannot therefore take place in private. Most do not have signs informing prisoners that calls are recorded or that there is a pre recorded message saying that the call is being made from the prison (see paragraphs 2.20 and 2.25).

5.13 All prisoners are given 30p to make a telephone call on admission. For some women who may have immediate needs to attend to, or want to talk to their children and do not have any money of their own, this is not sufficient (see paragraph 3.20).

5.14 Prisoners can send as many letters as they can afford.

Searching

5.15 The searching of visitors is carried out in an appropriate way.

Mother and Baby Issues

5.16 A multidisciplinary team comprising healthcare, social workers (both prison and community based), Family Contact Officers and the community health visitor oversee the implementation of the draft mother and baby policy on behalf of the establishment. *The policy is still in draft form and should be finalised. There is no clear training strategy for officers and healthcare staff working with mothers and babies. This should be addressed.*

5.17 There were ten pregnant prisoners in the establishment on the first day of inspection. Two mothers also had their children living with them (one in the Independent Living Unit and one in the Mother and Baby Unit). No issues were identified by the mothers who had their children with them in prison.

5.18 The Mother and Baby Unit in Peebles House is not fit for purpose. As a result, one mother had recently been moved to the Independent Living Unit at an earlier stage in her sentence than would normally meet the criteria. There is also no area where babies and toddlers can play in the open air in Peebles House.

5.19 Due to overcrowding prisoners who were not pregnant were also living in the Mother and Baby Unit. *The door between the Mother and Baby Unit and the accommodation for convicted prisoners is not always locked. This should be addressed.*

5.20 It is recommended that a purpose built Mother and Baby Unit is created.

5.21 All equipment supplied by the prison and in use at the time of inspection was of a satisfactory standard.

6. ENTITLEMENTS

Outcome

Prisoners' entitlements are accorded them in all circumstances without their facing difficulty.

6.1 Many prisoners do not know what they are entitled to. Some prisoners do not have confidence in the complaints procedure.

Legal Entitlements

6.2 Legal text books and information on human rights are available in the library. Copies of the Prison Rules are available in the house blocks. Prisoners have access to a range of communications materials. Many prisoners do not know what they are entitled to within the prison.

Management of Disciplinary Procedures

6.3 Disciplinary hearings are held in an annex of Younger House. The holding rooms are not fit for purpose: they are dirty, in need of decoration and have no suitable furniture. The hearing room is too small and one member of staff has to stand as there is not enough room to sit during the hearing. *The arrangements for holding disciplinary hearings should be improved.*

6.4 Adjudicators ensure that prisoners understand the charges, have enough time to prepare a defence and are ready for the hearing. All were offered a pen and paper to take notes. *No prisoners were offered a copy of the Prison Rules. This should be addressed.*

6.5 Disciplinary paperwork is completed effectively. The process followed and the reasons for decisions and awards are explained. There are on average 147 hearings a month, of which 4.5% result in “not guilty” or “case dismissed”.

Care Orderly Rooms

6.6 If a prisoner fails a Mandatory Drug Test (MDT) she is dealt with by way of a “Care Orderly Room” in preference to the usual Orderly Room process. This provides a more informal process and is conducted by a First Line Manager. The MDT officers are present during the hearing. This is an area of **good practice**. Other staff and experts such as addictions staff can be brought into the proceedings as required. A multi disciplinary case conference takes place after the Care Orderly Room should a downgrade or further support be a consideration. The Care Orderly Room is a positive initiative which supports rather than punishes people who have relapsed.

Religious Observance

6.7 The Chaplaincy team comprises of three chaplains and a lay worker providing a total of 36 hours of chaplaincy to the prison each week. Services are held at weekends. The Roman Catholic service is held on a Saturday and Reformed Church service on a Sunday. The Sunday services are held either at 10:00hrs or 15.30hrs depending on which of the chaplains are leading the service. Inspectors were unable to get a time for the Sunday service until the Saturday as staff had not had confirmation of who was leading the service. *Consideration should be given to how the timing of Sunday services could be made more predictable.*

6.8 The team is involved in the wider life of the prison offering spiritual support and pastoral care. There is Chaplaincy representation on the Multi-disciplinary Mental Health Team and the Equality and Diversity Committee. Chaplains provide input to Induction and there are regular singing workshops provided in Ross and Younger Houses. The Chaplaincy team feel supported by senior management and integrated in the daily life of the prison.

Visiting Committees

6.9 Cornton Vale has two Visiting Committees. One is responsible for the adult population and the other is responsible for the under 21 population.

6.10 Both Committees felt they had the support of senior management but expressed concern at the turnover of senior management especially at Governor level and the anxiety and feelings of instability that engendered in staff and prisoners. They praised staff who were trying to do a job under very difficult circumstances.

6.11 The Committees raised issues associated with high numbers; the lack of facilities fit for purpose; inadequate access to toilets; the lack of meaningful activity; and the poor physical and mental state of many of the prisoners.

6.12 The under 21 VC were especially concerned that the untried and convicted young prisoners were sharing a house block with adults, and prisoners subject to Rule 94. The adult VC described the prison as a “containment centre” and expressed concern that the multi-sensory room in Ross House was never used.

Prisoner Complaints Procedure

6.13 Complaints forms are available in all of the house blocks. The Internal Complaints Committee sits once a week. However, some prisoners lack confidence in the complaints procedure.

6.14 There is a very good booklet explaining the complaints process including how to access the Scottish Prison Complaints Commissioner. The procedure is also explained by a peer tutor as part of module one of the induction programme.

6.15 There were 708 complaints raised through the Complaints Procedure in the last year (September 2008-September 2009).

Management of Segregation

6.16 Cornton Vale does not have a segregation unit. Prisoners who need to be held out of normal association are usually held in either Younger House or Bruce House. The management of these prisoners creates further pressure on an already impoverished regime. When segregation prisoners are unlocked for time in the fresh

air, the toilet or to shower then the rest of the unit or entire house block has to be locked up.

6.17 On the first day of inspection three prisoners were subject to Rule 94 conditions² and six prisoners subject to ‘Rule 37’³.

6.18 The paperwork for ‘Rule 94’ prisoners is detailed and care plans are easy to follow. There is a minuted weekly review. Monthly case conferences have multi-disciplinary attendance, including a mental health nurse. When such a prisoner is held in the main part of one of the residential areas the accommodation is the same as that described at paragraph 2.10. At the start of ‘Rule 94’ conditions the regime is minimal with no access to television, radio or kettle. The weekly reviews and monthly case conferences may change the regime depending on assessed response, and prisoners may then be allowed access to a prison issue battery operated radio, television and kettle.

6.19 Prisoners on ‘Rule 94’ eat in their cells. They usually get the offer of time in the fresh air but it was difficult to verify this during the inspection. A record should be kept of the daily regime.

6.20 When ‘Rule 94’ prisoners are located in Bruce House or Younger House they are allowed to leave their cells at night to access the toilet. This provides the opportunity for them to go to other prisoners’ doors and maybe threaten or pressurise the occupants.

6.21 At the same time, prisoners are also being held out of circulation in the “back cells” in Ross House (see paragraphs 1.11, 2.12 and 3.37). During the inspection there were three prisoners subject to ‘Rule 37’ and one on ‘Rule 94’. Two of the rooms in this area have no beds; only mattresses on the floor whilst the other two have a mattress on a raised wooden bed. *All prisoners should have a bed.*

² To maintain good order or to ensure safety of other persons.

³ On instruction of the Medical Officer to be confined in specified conditions or be removed from specified activities. The conditions of this rule are usually applied to prisoners with mental health problems. Essentially, prisoners in this category can also be subject to ‘Rule 39’ (see paragraph 8.20).

6.22 Each back cell in Ross has a stainless steel WC and a hand washing facility recessed in the wall. The toilets are not enclosed despite meals being eaten in the cells. There is no electric power but there is a panel which allows access to the radio when it is working. The area for time in the fresh air is the same as that used by mainstream prisoners in Ross. There is an ablutions area but the sanitary ware is badly stained.

6.23 There are no dedicated staff in this area and when staff from the main hall deal with the needs of the prisoners this impacts on the regime for the rest of the prisoners.

6.24 This is an extremely depressing area which has a dreadful smell due mainly to the state of the women held under the conditions of 'Rule 37'.

6.25 A review of recent paperwork shows that the maximum time on 'Rule 94' is 77 days. The majority are in fact held for less than a month.

6.26 Prisoners subject to 'Rule 37' are not supported by the same degree of paperwork and entitlements as those held under 'Rule 94'. In Cornton Vale this is almost exclusively prisoners with mental health problems, some of whom display extremely challenging behaviour.

6.27 Although such prisoners are discussed regularly at the multi-disciplinary mental health team meetings there are no care plans available to staff responsible for their care and management. Unlike the structure which supports prisoners on 'Rule 94' staff report that decisions about the activities prisoners on 'Rule 37' are allowed to participate in on any particular day are left to their discretion and assessment. If a prisoner is left locked in her room for several days without time in the fresh air there is no paperwork to support the reasons for this.

6.28 *A more structured approach to the management of prisoners subject to 'Rule 37' (and/or 'Rule 39' – see paragraph 8.20) needs to be developed.* The number of prisoners in Cornton Vale who need to be managed outwith the prison mainstream, including those currently being held in the "back cells" in Ross House, make it essential that investment is made in a dedicated segregation or "Care and

Separation Unit". **It is recommended that a purpose built unit to hold prisoners out of normal circulation is created and that staff working in this unit should be properly trained to do so.**

7. ACTIVITIES

Outcome

Prisoners take part in activities that educate, develop skills and personal qualities and prepare them for life outside prison.

7.1 Provision across a number of areas is target and input driven rather than needs and outcome led. This includes education and initiatives to develop skills. The education portfolio is too narrow and although the majority of prisoners have the opportunity to participate, there are not enough places available. The overall balance between activities and being confined in cells is skewed towards the latter.

Learning, Skills and Employability

Introduction

7.2 Carnegie College is contracted by SPS to deliver 20,000 hours of learning, skills and employability a year. College provision is managed by the Learning Centre Coordinator and delivered by a team of part-time tutors. A new Coordinator was appointed in June 2009. In addition to college delivered programmes, Learning Centre and SPS staff work with a range of other organisations, including Art Link Central and Stirling Council to provide a wider range of learning activities.

Staffing and Resources

7.3 The Learning Centre Coordinator is appropriately qualified and most of the staff delivering classes in the Learning Centre hold a teaching qualification or equivalent. Recent changes to the staffing profile have reduced the capacity of the Learning Centre to provide specialist support for literacy development and assistance for learners with additional barriers to learning.

7.4 Accommodation in the Learning Centre consists of a multi-purpose teaching space and a computing suite. Both rooms provide a comfortable and relaxed

environment for learning and good access to ICT. However, the range of learning activities is severely constrained by the size and type of accommodation available. This has resulted in a narrow range of programmes which does not provide sufficient breadth to meet the wider needs of prisoners. For example, there are no facilities for developing cooking skills. **It is recommended that the range of education, learning and employability programmes available should be broadened.** *In general, teaching areas are cluttered; visual displays in classrooms and the main foyer do not promote learning opportunities effectively enough; and residential staff are not trained to promote such activities. There is insufficient access to technologies to assist learners with disabilities or additional support needs.*

7.5 Staff make very effective use of Peer Tutors to support and enhance learning activities. There are good examples of Peer Tutors successfully encouraging and assisting prisoners to take part in learning. *However, staff do not have effective plans in place to maintain the levels of Peer Tutors required. This should be addressed.*

Access to Learning, Skills and Employability

7.6 All prisoners have access to learning opportunities, although this is very limited for those on remand. The Learning Centre provides access to a narrow range of programmes which includes accredited courses in ICT, communication and numeracy. In the last year 38% of prisoners took part in educational activities and the SPS Prisoner Survey indicates a decrease in participation of 8% since 2007. There is a waiting list for access to the full-time education programme. *Cornton Vale should look at ways of significantly increasing participation in education.*

7.7 All prisoners receive information about learning, skills and employability activities during their induction. However, for many the information is provided too early to be useful to them and particularly when they are dealing with difficult issues on entry to the prison. *Overall, arrangements for promoting learning across the establishment are poor and should be improved.* The Learning Centre prospectus provides useful and up-to-date information about a wide range of programmes, initiatives and projects. Prisoners on remand have no access to classes for literacy and

numeracy. Staff and Peer Tutors identified that those most in need of literacy support do not access provision to improve their skills.

7.8 *Route movements and other prison matters sometimes limit the ability of prisoners to access their programmes. This should not happen.*

7.9 A number of the women in the Independent Living Unit were taking part in work external to the prison. Placements work particularly well and provide prisoners with purposeful activities and the structure of daily work.

7.10 Prisoners on work parties have weekly access to ICT classes, but are prevented from participating in project-based activities, such as Art Link due to work patterns. *Due to a lack of suitable facilities in the Learning Centre, prisoners are unable to undertake classes in art or cooking. This should be addressed. However, there is plenty of room in the grounds for classes in gardening. These classes should be introduced.*

7.11 Six learners are currently undertaking HNC in Administration through open learning.

7.12 'Next Steps', the pre-release employability course and 'Money Matters' are available to all prisoners in advance of liberation. *However, uptake of these programmes is low and there is insufficient access to life-skills classes to prepare learners for release. This should be addressed.*

Assessment of Need

7.13 Staff use a range of methods to assess the skills and needs of new prisoners. These include the SPS Alerting Tool, SQA Core Skills initial screening tool and Individual Learning Plans. Occasionally, the methods used are not sufficiently user-friendly to engage prisoners in assessing their needs, particularly those with a previous negative experience of learning. Peer Tutors provide very effective one-to-one support to help new offenders identify and discuss their literacy and numeracy levels and wider skill needs. *However, there are no arrangements in place to collate and analyse the*

findings from these processes to identify the overall skill levels and needs of the prisoner population. As a result, staff do not make effective use of this information to plan provision to meet identified needs. This should be addressed.

Delivery of Learning

7.14 Staff are approachable and supportive. They use a range of appropriate approaches to encourage and help learners engage in activities. In most classes, staff use appropriate materials to support learning. *However, in some cases materials are dated and in need of refreshing. Some computing workbooks are not consistent with the versions of software being used and this causes unnecessary confusion for prisoners studying on these programmes.*

7.15 In core skills classes, learners are able to work at their own level and progress at an appropriate pace. Staff provide suitable levels of challenge and support. Learners are encouraged to draw on their individual areas of interest to develop and apply new skills. Learners are able to access additional materials in the library to support and enhance their learning.

7.16 Very few prisoners receive certification for their vocational activities. For example, those on the cleaning work party are unable to complete BICS qualifications because the staff member responsible for training has to escort work party members around the prison to their daily tasks and this significantly reduces time for training.

7.17 *There are insufficient arrangements for prison and learning centre staff to work together in the planning and delivery of provision across education and work-based activities. This results in missed opportunities for prisoners to gain and receive recognition for core, vocational and wider skills whilst undertaking prison activities. This should be addressed.*

Prisoner's Learning Experiences

7.18 Prisoners who access learning activities enjoy and value their learning experiences. They like the welcoming atmosphere of the Learning Centre and the

informal relationships they have with their tutors. Many of the prisoners reported gaining new skills and receiving recognition of learning for the first time. The Peer Tutoring system has been very effective in reassuring prisoners who are nervous about undertaking programmes. Prisoners undertaking education programmes take their learning seriously and many are keen to continue their learning on release and apply their skills within a work context.

Achievement

7.19 Most prisoners consider they have developed confidence and increased their self-esteem through their learning. Almost all prisoners gained new skills and there are good arrangements for celebrating their achievements at award ceremonies. These events provide good opportunities for prisoners to share their achievements with family and friends. Most prisoners who attended the learning centre received recognition for their learning and were proud of their achievements. Over the last year, 41 prisoners have attained a total of 172 SQA units, mainly in communication, numeracy and information technology. However, there are insufficient opportunities for learners to gain formal accreditation to assist them in progressing onto further learning or gaining employment. In too many cases, prisoners in work parties do not have opportunity to undertake vocational qualifications relevant to their area of work. *There are no opportunities for prisoners in work parties to gain informal or formal recognition for core skills gained through their work experience. This should be addressed.*

7.20 The Peer Tutoring scheme incorporates useful training on ‘What we mean by adult learning, Barriers to learning, Use of ICT in tutoring’ and ‘How to teach literacies’. Participants value the training programme and the opportunity to apply the skills they have gained to future contexts including working in the community. This is an area of **good practice**.

Ethos and Values

7.21 Overall, there are good relationships between education staff and prisoners. Prisoners work well with each other and staff and this creates a positive and relaxed environment for learning.

Quality Assurance

7.22 Staff in the Learning Centre carried out an evaluation of provision in March 2009. This has been useful in stimulating dialogue and has helped to identify activities and services which are effective as well as areas for development. However, overall reviews of activities are not sufficiently evaluative and do not provide clear actions and measurable targets for improvement. *Staff do not involve learners sufficiently in evaluation processes and there are no systems in place for staff to draw on prisoner data or feedback from prisoners to inform and improve the quality of provision. This should be addressed.*

Library

7.23 The library facility is welcoming and provides good access to an appropriate range of printed and interactive resources including computers. Non-English speakers have access to books and resources in a range of languages. A good range of magazines and books are available and take account of different levels of reading skills. Prisoners can order books through Stirling Council Library, although in some cases this service is slow. The librarian trains prisoners to act as 'Education Pass Women' to provide services within the library environment. Four prisoners currently carry out this role but this is likely to reduce in the near future as there are insufficient arrangements to ensure effective succession planning.

7.24 Access to books and magazines is generally poor in the house blocks. A trolley service had been proposed to address this; however, this had not been taken forward.

Work

7.25 The majority of convicted prisoners (77% at the time of inspection) participate in work parties. Opportunities are available in the laundry, kitchen, grass cutting, craft workshop, bicycle workshop, hairdressing salon, and as cleaners and pass women. Around 180 prisoners are involved in these activities daily. *However, a staff shortage, allied to staff absences, often results in at least one work party being cancelled, resulting in prisoners having to remain in their cells. This should not happen.* Remand

prisoners and those serving sentences of less than six months are not allocated to work parties.

7.26 In most of the work areas, SPS staff are experienced and suitably qualified. However, there is insufficient liaison between SPS staff responsible for work areas and Learning Centre staff which results in missed opportunities for planning provision to maximise the benefits and outcomes for prisoners. Working in the garden, for example, relates almost exclusively to the cutting of the expanse of grass within the grounds. Little effort is made to do or teach proper gardening such as growing vegetables for the kitchen. *Gardening should become a properly trained activity and more appropriate grass cutting machines should be purchased.*

Community Work Placements

7.27 Seventeen prisoners living in the Independent Living Unit were participating in community work placements at the time of inspection. The quality of the placements is excellent and the views of the placement providers were very positive. Prison staff provide good support for providers and prisoners, and current demand for placements is being met. Overall the work placement scheme is working very well.

Other Out of Cell Activities

7.28 The availability of out of cell activities is variable throughout the establishment. In some house blocks, prisoners have access to a good range of evening activities including; arts and crafts, bingo, yoga and parenting skills. In others there is nothing. *The range of out of cell activities should be widened to all prisoners.*

7.29 A wide range of projects and initiatives such as ‘Homecoming’, ‘Reader-in-residence’ and ‘Artlink’ have been very successful in encouraging prisoners to develop new skills and interests.

7.30 All prisoners have timetabled access to gym facilities and many make good use of fitness equipment. However, recent staff constraints and redeployment of specialist gym instructors to general duties had limited access to the gym at weekends.

7.31 There are no outdoor facilities such as an Astroturf pitch, and very few weekend activities. *Outdoor sports areas should be created.*

8. HEALTHCARE

Outcome

Healthcare is provided to the same standard as in the community outside prison, available in response to need, with a full range of preventive services, promoting continuity with health services outside prison.

8.1 If a prisoner is unwell she will receive appropriate treatment. However, the health centre is not fit for purpose and there is a long waiting list to see the dentist. Due to recruitment and retention difficulties staff are struggling to deliver a number of services.

Physical Environment

8.2 The health centre is not fit for purpose. It is a 'stand alone' facility and comprises a range of offices and treatment areas over two floors. The first floor is used as office space for staff, and for the storage of healthcare records and Act2Care documentation. The ground floor comprises a pharmacy area; a dental room; doctor's clinical rooms; a well women clinical area, a triage room and a prisoner waiting area. The waiting area is very cramped and is not big enough for the number of prisoners who use it. A methadone dispensing area is adjacent to the waiting area. Nurse led clinics and meetings are sometimes cancelled due to a lack of available space. **It is recommended that a purpose built health centre is created.**

8.3 Health promotion literature is available in the clinical areas but is not available in the prisoners waiting area. *Some healthcare notices are out of date and should be replaced.*

8.4 Nurse dispensing is undertaken in "nurse stations" in the house blocks. *Some of these stations were very dirty, as was the nurse admission room in reception. There is a lack of up to date healthcare information in the waiting room in reception. These issues should be addressed.*

8.5 The majority of emergency equipment is stored in the health centre. Temperature control monitoring and equipment checks are very good.

Primary Healthcare

8.6 The healthcare team should comprise 6.5 primary care nurses; 2.8 addictions nurses; seven mental health nurses; a part time healthcare assistant, an administrator; a pharmacy assistant, two clinical nurse managers; and a doctor. However, the team is not at full complement and has been significantly depleted for the last two years, particularly in the areas of mental health and addictions. Overtime and agency nurse support is regularly required. Delivering a consistent service in these circumstances is very difficult. Medical clinics are still provided Mondays to Saturdays and if a prisoner is unwell she will receive appropriate treatment.

8.7 Nursing staff deliver a range of clinics. These include an immunisation clinic, respiratory clinic, diabetes clinic and a well women service. However, they depend on nursing staff finding time to deliver them. *Staff shortages have meant that these services are no longer being delivered to the same standard. This should be addressed.* Nursing staff also carry out a range of administrative tasks and this is stretching them to the limit.

8.8 Self referral forms are readily available in all halls. Nurse triage and doctors appointments are given priority and prisoners are seen within 72 hours. Women can ask to see a female doctor if they wish.

8.9 A robust process is in place for 'in possession' medication spot checks in the house blocks. This is an area of **good practice**. However, this information should be more readily available to operational staff in terms of the prison anti-bullying strategy.

8.10 There is a very good 'share point' computer site where information is readily available to all healthcare staff on clinic waiting times, staff training and nurse led clinic delivery.

Secondary Healthcare

8.11 A dentist attends the prison one day each week. This has not increased for more than ten years despite a doubling of the number of prisoners. As a result, the waiting time for non-urgent pre-planned dental treatment is over 16 weeks, although urgent cases have access to immediate pain relief from the doctor. Remand prisoners are only seen when they complain of dental pain. **It is recommended that waiting times to see the dentist are reduced and that dental care is provided to all prisoners on a needs basis.**

8.12 An optician and chiropodist visit the establishment at least once each month. Extra sessions are delivered if required. Prisoners on remand cannot access these services unless they are referred by the healthcare team.

8.13 A pharmacist attends the prison five times each month.

8.14 Forth Valley Hepatitis C Service now visit the prison, so prisoners do not have to attend hospital for treatment.

8.15 A health visitor from Forth Valley Health Board attends the establishment to support pregnant women who will deliver their babies in Stirling. She also provides one-to-one support to all new mothers who have their babies living with them in the prison. A midwife attends the establishment weekly to support women who are pregnant. Sessions include a regular antenatal clinic, parenting classes and postnatal support.

8.16 Liaison with external hospitals for appointments is very good. *However, women are only told of appointments an hour or so before. This can result in cancellations particularly when there is not the opportunity to shower first. This should be addressed.*

Mental Health Services

8.17 Two consultant psychiatrists attend the prison weekly and each has their own session: one for remand prisoners and one for convicted prisoners. They work closely with the mental health nurses. A nurse assesses prisoners and makes referrals to the Multidisciplinary Mental Health Team and the psychiatrist.

8.18 Fortnightly Multidisciplinary Mental Health Team meetings, chaired by the Head of Care, are held. The team is well represented by all functions and the level of joint working is good. *However, the meetings are sometimes cancelled due to a lack of meeting rooms. Indeed, the meeting scheduled during the inspection was cancelled because there was nowhere to hold it. This should not happen. In addition, these important meetings should not be cancelled because the psychiatrist or mental health nurse is unavailable.*

8.19 There are no waiting times for the psychiatrists' sessions, although prisoners can wait to see the mental health nurse.

8.20 Analysis of healthcare records for women who are being managed in the "back cells" in Ross House are a cause for concern, particularly those on 'Rule 39'⁴ (or 'Rule 37' – see paragraph 6.28). The notes were difficult to read, there was no evidence in one case of when the Rule was started. There were no individual care plans and no evidence of case conferencing with operational staff. It was also difficult to identify which section of the Rule was being applied and there was a lack of evidence in the notes in relation to prescribing practices and decisions. **It is recommended that very vulnerable women have proper care plans in place.**

Management of Medicines

8.21 Medication is stored in line with current legislation. Convicted prisoners are encouraged to keep medication in their own possession where appropriate. Recently, small boxes with individual codes have been put into cells for convicted prisoners to

⁴ Rule 39 provides for prisoners awaiting assessment for a mental disorder.

enable the safe storage of the medication. Remand prisoners should not have access to this service. *However, at the time of inspection remand prisoners who were living in Bruce House because of overcrowding had access to in possession medication. This should not happen.*

8.22 Operating practices for the administration of methadone on the bottom floor of the health centre are not secure: the hatch between the nurses and the prisoners is not locked and there can be as many as 12 prisoners queuing, with only one prison officer observing the process. *Operating practices in this respect should be secure.*

8.23 At weekends, evening medication including night sedation and anti-depressants is dispensed between 16.00hrs and 17.00hrs. *This is very early and should be reviewed.*

8.24 Methadone is not given to prisoners who are prescribed it before going to court (see paragraph 3.8). Nor is methadone given to prisoners on the day of liberation. **It is recommended that prescribed methadone is given to prisoners on the day of their liberation.**

Addictions

8.25 The Addictions Co-ordinator oversees the implementation of the substance misuse policy within the establishment. Regular meetings are held within the prison and links with the community are excellent. The team is proactive in dealing with the national Thoughtcare Addictions Service and Alcohol and Drug Prevention Teams.

8.26 The Enhanced Addictions Casework Team comprises a team leader, a senior practitioner, five case workers and an administrator. Facilities for the team are satisfactory and the team sees prisoners in the Links Centre. The team is well integrated within the prison and has established excellent links with the addictions team. The team provides a session in the induction programme; delivers one-to-one substance misuse support; and provides group work sessions.

8.27 A weekly Addictions Assessment Referral Group is held to discuss individual prisoner needs. This is a multidisciplinary group with input from the doctor.

8.28 Admission statistics for 2008 show that 55% of prisoners tested positive for illegal substances on admission to the establishment. On liberation this was 15%.

8.29 One hundred and seven prisoners were receiving methadone during the Inspection. Nine of these were reducing their dose, 83 were maintaining their dose and 15 were actively stabilising their dose following admission to the prison.

8.30 Although a harm reduction pack protocol has been developed this is not advertised in the establishment and the packs themselves have never been given out.

9. REINTEGRATION

Outcome

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that prisoners are reintegrated safely into the community and where possible into a situation less likely to lead to further crime.

9.1 There are excellent links with community based organisations to help prisoners reintegrate back into the community. Addictions throughcare is also very good. However, programmes to address offending behaviour have stalled.

Integrated Case Management

9.2 Integrated Case Management operates at two levels: Standard and Enhanced. Standard procedures apply to prisoners serving four years or less and involves an assessment of need and development of a Community Integration Plan (CIP). Enhanced procedures apply to prisoners serving over four years and all sex offenders serving six months or more. Enhanced procedures involve prisoners participating in multi-disciplinary meetings to review risk and needs and develop strategies to reduce the risk of reoffending on release.

9.3 Cornton Vale's approach to Standard procedures is well structured. A Community Integration Plan is always developed from the Core Screening process. Around 50 CIPs are completed each month. A pre release meeting takes place four weeks prior to liberation and this offers the opportunity to meet with staff who identify community service providers.

9.4 The establishment conducts between four and ten Enhanced Case Conferences each month. These are chaired by the ICM coordinator or the Prison Based Social Worker. Attendance by community and prison based social workers, the ICM coordinator and the prisoner meets minimum standards. Although invitations are offered to family members, take up is very low. *Given Cornton Vale's good efforts to liaise with families, alternative arrangements should be put in place to allow greater family participation in Integrated Case Management Conferences.*

9.5 The ICM process is linked to the work of the local Risk Management Group.

Interventions to Address Offending Behaviour

9.6 The facilities in which programmes to address offending behaviour are delivered are adequate. The programme team comprises six officers and one manager. There should be input from social work, psychology, healthcare and addictions.

9.7 However, as a result of staffing issues the delivery of programmes has stalled. The Parenting programme has been affected by the withdrawal of funding from the Aberlour Trust. All of the accredited programmes have been affected by long term sick leave and lack of availability of psychologists. The three social workers trained to deliver programmes are no longer available (two have left and one was on maternity leave) and one of the officers trained to deliver accredited programmes was working in a different role.

9.8 There were significant waiting lists for the three Accredited programmes and five approved programmes which normally run. Numbers on the waiting lists at the time of inspection were as follows:

Accredited Programmes

- Constructs (5)
- Female Offending Behaviour (10)
- Substance Related Offending Behaviour (4)

Approved Programmes

- Drugs Action for Change (40)
- Alcohol Awareness (34)
- Relationships (15)
- Sleep and Anxiety (44)
- Parenting (11)

9.9 Numbers participating in offending behaviour programmes at the time of inspection were as follows:

- Female Offending Behaviour (8)
- Substance Related Offending Behaviour (6)
- Sleep and Anxiety (10)

9.10 There were also another 35 prisoners waiting to be assessed. These waiting lists show the high level of need within the prison. **It is recommended that prisoners are assessed for programmes to address offending behaviour, and that prisoners who have been assessed are provided with the relevant programme.**

Partner Organisations

9.11 The establishment has developed excellent links with community based agencies. There is regular input from housing agencies, JobcentrePlus, SACRO, Circle (family support), Routes Out of Prison and Caledonia Youth. At least another 12 organisations come into the prison on a needs basis. A networking and training session is held by the agencies four times a year. Several of the agencies give a presentation. These events demonstrate the excellent work being done in the Links Centre and are an area of **good practice**.

Preparation for Release

9.12 Needs are identified early in a prisoner's sentence, during the core screen assessments. These are recorded and community agencies can then conduct their own assessments and provide interventions if required.

9.13 All prisoners serving four months or more are required to attend a pre release course lasting one day. This takes place four weeks before liberation. An information booklet is given out at the end of the course. This is an area of **good practice**.

9.14 The Independent Living Units offer support for a return to the community for prisoners serving longer sentences. Women in the ILUs have access to the community work placements each week day.

9.15 There is insufficient access to life-skills classes to prepare prisoners for release (see paragraph 7.12).

9.16 Cornton Vale is a national facility so it is not always possible to provide support in every circumstance. However, agencies do try to link up and overall there is a structured approach to preparing prisoners for release.

10. GOOD PRACTICE

10.1 The duty manager conducts random property checks in reception at the weekend (paragraph 3.16).

10.2 Prisoners are given two new sets of underwear and two new pairs of socks on admission to the establishment (paragraph 3.17).

10.3 The induction arrangements (paragraph 3.27).

10.4 The Family Contact Officers have their own, dedicated, telephone number (paragraph 5.2).

10.5 The arrangements for prisoners to receive their letters by email (paragraph 5.6).

10.6 Mandatory Drug Testing Officers are present during the Care Orderly Rooms (paragraph 6.6).

10.7 The use of Peer Tutors in education, particularly for specific training initiatives (paragraph 7.20).

10.8 The processes for “in possession” medication spot checks in the house blocks (paragraph 8.9).

10.9 The network and training events held by community agencies in the prison (paragraph 9.11).

10.10 The information booklet given out at the end of the pre-release course (paragraph 9.13).

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for SPS Headquarters

11.1 Female prisoners should have a focus at SPS Board level, with a view to setting the agenda to the future and ensuring such an agenda is implemented quickly and with purpose (paragraph 1.4).

11.2 The SPS should encourage uniformed members of staff to become familiar with a foreign language in order to build up a pool of expertise in each prison (paragraph 4.20).

General Recommendations

11.3 The use of the “back cells” in Ross House should be discontinued immediately and more appropriate accommodation should be used for the most vulnerable women (paragraphs 2.12 and 3.37).

11.4 The conditions in Peebles House should be improved (paragraph 2.19).

11.5 The conditions in Bruce House should be improved (paragraph 2.24).

11.6 The conditions in Younger House should be improved (paragraph 2.28).

11.7 As a matter of priority alternative systems to access toilets in Bruce and Younger Houses should be installed. In the meantime, all prisoners should be able to access a toilet within a reasonable time (paragraph 2.37).

11.8 Outdoor exercise areas should be improved and maintained (paragraph 2.40).

11.9 The regime and arrangements for catering should be improved at the weekend (paragraph 2.44).

11.10 Arrangements should be put in place which allow women to be held in custody nearer the court at which they are appearing, if significant travel from Cornton Vale is involved or that greater use is made of court video link facilities. In the meantime, it is recommended that women travelling to court are offered the opportunity to shower before travel; are given a proper breakfast prior to travel; receive their methadone dose prior to travel; are allowed reading materials during travel; and have a hot meal on return (paragraph 3.8).

11.11 A purpose built First Night Centre should be created (paragraph 3.23).

11.12 The internal progression system should be improved and prisoners should not be moved around the prison as often as they are (paragraph 3.33).

11.13 The Suicide Risk Management Group should be reinvigorated (paragraph 3.39).

11.14 A purpose built visits facility including a visitor centre as a national resource for Cornton Vale should be created (paragraph 5.9).

11.15 A purpose built Mother and Baby Unit should be created (paragraph 5.20).

11.16 A purpose built unit to hold prisoners out of normal circulation should be created and staff working in this unit should be properly trained to do so (paragraph 6.28).

11.17 The range of education, learning and employability programmes available should be broadened (paragraph 7.4).

11.18 A purpose built health centre should be created (paragraph 8.2).

11.19 Waiting times to see the dentist should be reduced and dental care should be provided to all prisoners on a needs basis (paragraph 8.11).

11.20 Very vulnerable women should have proper care plans in place (paragraph 8.20).

11.21 Prescribed methadone should be given to prisoners on the day of their liberation (paragraph 8.24).

11.22 Prisoners should be assessed for programmes to address offending behaviour, and when they have been assessed they should be provided with the relevant programme (paragraph 9.10).

12. ACTION POINTS

12.1 Ross House staff should supervise the women using the four recreation areas in the hall at all times (paragraph 2.9).

12.2 The arrangements for maintaining privacy in the ablutions areas in Peebles, Bruce and Younger houses should be improved (paragraphs 2.18, 2.23 and 2.28).

12.3 All telephones should have hoods (paragraphs 2.20, 2.25 and 5.12).

12.4 Notices informing prisoners that calls are recorded should be placed beside the telephones (paragraph 2.20 and 2.25).

12.5 Every effort should be made to keep adult prisoners and young offenders separate in Bruce House and in Younger House (paragraphs 2.23 and 2.28).

12.6 Additional telephones should be installed in Younger House (paragraph 2.29).

12.7 The procedures for reporting faults in the Independent Living Unit and responding to these should be reviewed (paragraph 2.33).

12.8 Meals should be served later at weekends (paragraph 2.44).

12.9 The amount of food served on Saturdays should be increased (paragraph 2.44).

12.10 The standard of food at the point of dining should be improved (paragraph 2.46).

12.11 Sufficient cutlery should be issued to prisoners as a matter of course (paragraph 2.48).

12.12 Senior managers should record when they taste food in the kitchen and at the places where it is served (paragraph 2.49).

- 12.13 A full range of toiletries should be available in the canteen (paragraph 2.50).
- 12.14 The shortage of laundry bags and the problem of bags being overfilled should be addressed (paragraph 2.53).
- 12.15 All escort vehicles should have drinking water on board (paragraph 3.9).
- 12.16 The safety message on escort vehicles should always be played, and heard by prisoners, before the journey starts (paragraph 3.9).
- 12.17 Admission information should be played on the TV in the holding room in reception (paragraph 3.13).
- 12.18 Prisoners should not be required to give personal details in the presence of others in reception (paragraph 3.15).
- 12.19 The food available to prisoners arriving too late for the evening meal should be reviewed (paragraph 3.18).
- 12.20 The telephone interpreting service should be accessed by staff in reception (paragraph 3.19).
- 12.21 Prisoners should be given a telephone credit on admission which meets their immediate needs (paragraphs 3.20 and 5.13).
- 12.22 Senior managers should have an input to the induction process (paragraph 3.26).
- 12.23 Suicide risk care plans should be based on individual risk and need (paragraph 3.36).
- 12.24 Staff should be trained and the multi-sensory room should be used as a matter of course (paragraph 3.38).

12.25 Appropriate meeting rooms for Listener interviews should be available in each house block (paragraph 3.41).

12.26 Notices highlighting the Listener Scheme should be put up around the establishment (paragraph 3.41).

12.27 When a Listener goes into a house block to see a prisoner staff should not shout out the prisoner's name and that a Listener is there to see them (paragraph 3.42).

12.28 A copy of night shift orders specific to role should be available to all night duty staff (paragraph 3.43).

12.29 Senior management should record visits that they make during the night (paragraph 3.44).

12.30 The quality of the property bags and seals for the bags used by Cornton Vale for women going to court should be improved (paragraphs 4.7 and 4.16).

12.31 The arrangements for ensuring privacy in the toilet area in Kilmarnock Sheriff Court should be improved (paragraph 4.8).

12.32 Disabled prisoners should not be required to pass through a public area to reach the court rooms in Kilmarnock Sheriff Court (paragraph 4.10).

12.33 The toilet for female prisoners in Glasgow Sheriff Court should offer adequate privacy (paragraph 4.13).

12.34 Alternative arrangements should be found for getting women from the Glasgow Sheriff Court holding cells to the District Courtroom (paragraph 4.14).

12.35 Processes should be reviewed to reduce the time held in overcrowded holding cells in Glasgow Sheriff Court (paragraph 4.15).

12.36 Graffiti should be removed from the walls of the cells in Glasgow Sheriff Court (paragraph 4.17).

12.37 There should be regular reviews with non-English speaking prisoners via an interpreter (paragraph 4.20).

12.38 Access to visits for disabled prisoners and visitors should be improved (paragraph 4.23).

12.39 The draft mother and baby policy should be finalised (paragraph 5.16).

12.40 There should be a clear training strategy for officers and healthcare staff working with mothers and babies (paragraph 5.16).

12.41 The door between the Mother and Baby Unit and the accommodation for convicted prisoners should always be locked (paragraph 5.19).

12.42 The arrangements for holding disciplinary hearings in Younger House should be improved (paragraph 6.3).

12.43 Prisoners should be offered a copy of the Prison Rules at disciplinary hearings (paragraph 6.4).

12.44 Consideration should be given to how the timing of Sunday worship services could be made more predictable (paragraph 6.7).

12.45 All prisoners being held in the back cells in Ross House should have a bed (paragraph 6.21).

12.46 A more structured approach to the management of prisoners subject to 'Rule 37' and/or 'Rule 39' should be developed (paragraph 6.28).

12.47 Teaching areas in the learning centre should be cleared of clutter (paragraph 7.4).

12.48 Visual displays should promote learning opportunities more effectively (paragraph 7.4).

12.49 There should be sufficient access to technologies to assist learners with disabilities or additional needs (paragraph 7.4).

12.50 Education staff should have effective plans in place to maintain the levels of Peer Tutors required (paragraph 7.5).

12.51 Cornton Vale should look at ways of significantly increasing participation in education (paragraph 7.6).

12.52 Arrangements for promoting learning across the establishment should be improved (paragraph 7.7).

12.53 Route movements and other prison matters should not limit the ability of prisoners to access their education programmes (paragraph 7.8).

12.54 Prisoners should be able to undertake classes in art, cooking and gardening (paragraph 7.10).

12.55 There should be sufficient access to life-skills classes to prepare prisoners for release (paragraphs 7.12 and 9.15).

12.56 Processes should be put in place to meet the assessed skills needs of prisoners (paragraph 7.13).

12.57 Some learning materials should be updated (paragraph 7.14).

12.58 Computing workbooks should be consistent with the versions of software being used (paragraph 7.14).

12.59 Sufficient arrangements should be put in place for prison and learning centre staff to work together in the planning and delivery of provision across education and work-based activities (paragraph 7.17).

12.60 There should be opportunities for prisoners in work parties to gain informal or formal recognition for core skills gained through their work experience (paragraph 7.19).

12.61 Education staff should involve learners sufficiently in evaluation processes and put systems in place to improve the quality of provision (paragraph 7.22).

12.62 Work parties should not be cancelled because of staff shortages or sickness (paragraph 7.25).

12.63 Gardening should become a properly trained activity and more appropriate grass cutting equipment should be purchased (paragraph 7.26).

12.64 The range of out of cells activities should be widened to all prisoners (paragraph 7.28).

12.65 Outdoor sports areas should be created (paragraph 7.31).

12.66 Healthcare notices should be updated (paragraph 8.3).

12.67 “Nurse stations” in the house blocks should be kept clean (paragraph 8.4).

12.68 Up to date healthcare information should be available in the waiting room in the health centre reception (paragraph 8.4).

12.69 The nurse led clinics should not be affected by shortages of nursing staff (paragraph 8.7).

12.70 Prisoners should be told of hospital appointments more than one hour before the appointment, to allow them time to have a shower (paragraph 8.16).

12.71 Multidisciplinary Mental Health Team meetings should not be cancelled because of a lack of meeting rooms or because the psychiatrist or mental health nurse is unavailable (paragraph 8.18).

12.72 Remand prisoners should not have access to in possession medication (paragraph 8.21).

12.73 Operating practices for the administration of methadone in the health centre should be secure (paragraph 8.22).

12.74 The times at which evening medication is dispensed at weekends should be reviewed (paragraph 8.23).

12.75 Alternative arrangements should be put in place to allow greater family participation in Integrated Case Management Conferences (paragraph 9.4).

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

Prison 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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