



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

Report on
HM Institution

Cornton Vale

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland

1996

ROLE OF THE PRISONS INSPECTORATE

Section 7 of the Prisons (Scotland) Act 1989 provides the statutory basis for the Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland. Before 1981 the post of Chief Inspector was held by a Prison Governor; but it was decided then that the appointment of an outsider would provide greater impartiality and independence of outlook. The Chief Inspector receives strong professional support from 2 senior Governors from the Scottish Prison Service who are seconded to the posts of Deputy Chief Inspector and Inspector. A Staff Officer, who is a civil servant seconded from The Scottish Office, completes the Inspectorate team.

Scotland's 22 penal establishments each receive a full formal inspection, on a cyclical basis, currently every 3½-4 years. These inspections take between a week and a fortnight depending on the size and complexity of the prison/institution. The Inspectorate examines all aspects of the establishment from the point of view of humanity, propriety and efficiency, while having proper regard to security, discipline and control. The Inspectorate also takes account of present day policies and concepts applying to the Scottish Prison Service. The Chief Inspector comments on general trends in an Annual Report to the Secretary of State which is laid before Parliament and published.

The Chief Inspector is not an Ombudsman and cannot deal with individual complaints by prisoners or staff. But groups of prisoners and groups of staff are interviewed during each formal inspection, their general views are recorded, and may form a basis for recommendations or suggestions for improvement (points of note).

Inspection reports attempt to give a balanced account of conditions in the prison/institution, as they are found. When completed, inspection reports are sent directly to the Secretary of State: they are not subject to negotiation with the Governor or the Scottish Prison Service. In due course, the Secretary of State's response is published along with the report. The Chief Inspector has no executive powers but is able to draw the Secretary of State's attention to any aspects of a penal establishment which call for comment. The publicity which the Chief Inspector's reports attract is in itself a powerful instrument for change and improvement.

Full inspection reports are followed up by one day visits in subsequent years. Short reports on other visits are sent to the Governor and to the Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service. The Inspectorate also undertakes occasional studies on a theme common to all or several penal establishments; and these, too, are normally published.

Finally the Inspectorate is responsible for inspecting legalised police cells which are used to hold prisoners awaiting trial locally in isolated areas or, following conviction, pending transfer to a main prison. These inspections are carried out every 3 years. Reports are submitted to the Secretary of State, sent to the Chief Constables concerned and summarised in the Chief Inspector's next Annual Report.

RESPONSE TO HM CHIEF INSPECTORS REPORT ON HM INSTITUTION CORNTON VALE

Statement by Secretary of State for Scotland

I am grateful to HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for his Report on HM Institution, Cornton Vale and for the recommendations contained therein.

I welcome the Chief Inspector's endorsement of the general quality of staff at Cornton Vale and recognise the difficult circumstances under which they, and their colleagues elsewhere, work. I am, however, concerned at the number of suicides which have taken place, and at the Chief Inspector's findings as to the quality of regimes and the incidence of drug abuse among the prisoner population whether in or out of custody.

I agree that some further research on drugs could be helpful though valuable data have been already obtained from the survey carried out by Doctors Gore and Bird in 1995, which did not focus solely on HIV, and further useful information is being obtained in the context of random mandatory drug testing (MDT) which was introduced earlier this year. It is quite clear that drug abuse is a factor in the lives of large numbers of prisoners and the first priority must be given to enabling prisoners to address their drug addiction while in prison. MDT and its related support programmes will make a contribution to that.

I very much agree that the Institution's anti-drug strategy should have clear policies, and work is in hand to ensure that the approach taken is effective. The recently appointed Medical Officer will act as team leader. It will be part of his task to ensure that medical protocols are properly in place and that appropriate disciplinary and cross-functional working takes place.

It is important that the addictions worker is properly resourced and targeted. For the time being the existing addictions worker is concentrating on the remand population and a review of specialist regime resources will determine whether a further addictions worker, as opposed to other specialist input, is the most suitable response to the needs of prisoners in general. Throughcare links with the community are essential, and steps are being taken to strengthen these.

The Chief Inspector has made a number of recommendations in response to the recent extremely disturbing incidence of suicides at the Institution. As the Chief Inspector notes, it is for Fatal Accident Inquiries to determine the individual circumstances and I note that to date none has identified any specific shortcomings in procedures.

I agree that wherever possible, and consistent with the needs of security and good order, care for the potentially suicidal should provide for integration with other prisoners and staff, and that a more therapeutic regime, particularly among the remand population, would be helpful. An intensive support regime has now been introduced for remand prisoners with the emphasis on maximising time spent in association out of cell, including at weekends. Access to education and physical training has been increased for remand prisoners, and opportunities for better work for convicted prisoners are being sought. The Governor intends to re-introduce the Homemaker scheme.

An additional officer had already been added on an interim basis to each shift in the remand block, as the Chief Inspector recommends, and this has now been made permanent. New arrangements have been put in place for the induction of remand prisoners, and steps have been taken to enable unit residential officers to provide personal support to those who require it. A second telephone is being installed, but I do not agree that televisions should be provided in-cell. The anti-bullying strategy was due for evaluation in the autumn and this is being taken forward as planned. It will take account of good practice elsewhere.

The Governor will consider the question of the timing of the delivery of prisoners by the police though the scope for change will be conditioned by the operational requirements of the police and the courts. She is also considering improvements in the reception procedures. The current staffing mix does not permit a nurse with psychiatric qualifications to be available at the point at which every prisoner is received into the establishment, but priority will be given to training general nurses in suicide awareness. It may be necessary to increase the number of psychiatry sessions but the Governor is considering what scale of additional resource might be justified against the wider background of medical, nursing and other specialist needs. Links have been established with providers of community psychiatric nursing services and follow-up throughcare arrangements are being made.

As regards the wider issues raised by the Chief Inspector, I accept that it may be helpful if the transfer of low security category male Young Offenders to a separate and previously under-utilised part of the prison could be further delayed to allow management to give priority to remand prisoners, and other matters. The timing of transfer has therefore been postponed.

I shall consider further the Chief Inspector's recommendations with regard to bail hostels, and psychiatric screening in the courts, though I consider that the latter proposal is best looked at in the context of services for mentally disturbed offenders in general.

So far as bail hostels are concerned, it is the Government's policy to develop a network of supervised and supported accommodation to meet the needs of the courts as well as the Parole Board. Joint working with local authorities and other interests to review demand and develop and implement a strategy and corresponding national standards is underway. A number of bed spaces are already available in Glasgow (including a facility with provision for women) and elsewhere in Scotland. Residential provision for offenders and people on remand is nevertheless both expensive and often difficult to establish. A balance has also to be achieved between the risk the alleged offender may pose to the public and community safety, and risk to the alleged offender herself. In some cases remand in custody is the only credible option, particularly where the offender concerned has a history of breaches of bail.

HMCIP's recommendations will be taken forward by the Scottish Prison Service and the Chief Executive will reply to the Points of Note.

The Right Honourable Michael Forsyth MP
Secretary of State for Scotland

Sir

In accordance with my terms of reference as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, I forward a report of an inspection recently carried out at HM Institution Cornton Vale.

Twenty five formal recommendations have been made: a number of points of note and related matters have been drawn to the notice of the Governor of the establishment and the Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service.



C B FAIRWEATHER
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
for Scotland

9 August 1996

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A 10 day inspection of HM Institution Cornton Vale was carried out during the period 19 to 31 May 1996.

1.2 The last full examination had taken place in 1991, since when there had been one day follow up visits in each succeeding year. In the normal course of events a full inspection would have been due in 1995. However, following the Inspectorate's Thematic Study into "The Custody and Training of Female Prisoners and Young Offenders in Scotland" which was published in April 1995, it was decided to delay a full inspection until 1997, as this would allow changes to the regime to be properly effected. Nevertheless, the follow up inspection in 1995 was extended to 3 days in order to help bridge the growing gap between formal inspections.

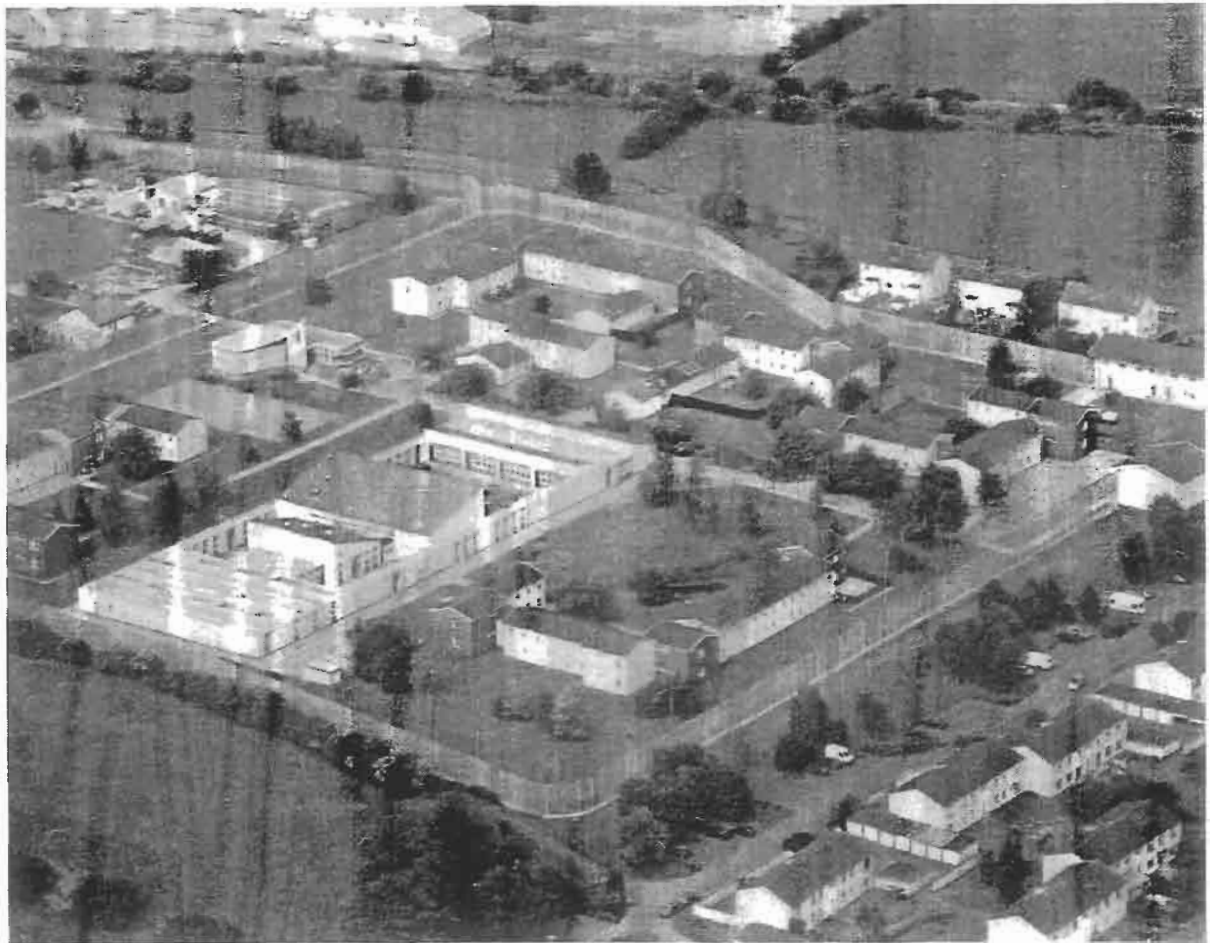
1.3 The SPS had meanwhile recognised that one of the consequences of implementing other recommendations contained in the Thematic Study, was that with female prisoners dispersed closer to their homes at Inverness, Aberdeen and Dumfries and to the Training for Freedom (TFF) hostel at Polmont, there would be a number of vacant places left at Cornton Vale. This contributed to the decision to house up to 55 male Category D Young Offenders (YOs) in a sectioned off area of Cornton Vale (Bravo Block), in order to relieve overcrowding elsewhere in the SPS estate. This move had been due to take place in mid 1996, but had been delayed due to staffing difficulties and a local staffing dispute.

1.4 Subsequently, in late April 1996, the Inspectorate decided to mount a much earlier full inspection of Cornton Vale than the one previously planned for 1997. This was in response to the worrying spate of 3 suicides and one attempted suicide which had occurred in the Remand Block and which had been followed by another death and a second serious attempt on 26 and 28 April 1996 respectively. Concerns about healthcare and regime development had also begun to emerge at much the same time.

1.5 As the inspection unfolded, it became apparent that Management had been struggling to cope with a growing number of prisoners arriving at the prison with drug abuse and associated mental health problems. These, together with intermittent overcrowding problems in Yankee and Papa Blocks (resulting from preparations being made for male YOs and the creation of addiction support and induction units), were posing very serious difficulties for a willing staff, who had had to cope with the pressures created by an alarming number of suicides. The growing demands of drug abusing and drug damaged women had also been impacting on the medical support system, which at the time of inspection was only just managing to cope. Although there had been some progress in a number of areas since 1995, there was not nearly enough for prisoners to do during the week or at weekends.

1.6 It should be acknowledged that Management at all levels had very little time to prepare for this inspection, which was mounted at extremely short notice.

2. ESTABLISHMENT



2.1 Cornton Vale is the only purpose built penal establishment in Scotland for convicted female offenders, although some short sentence offenders can now be held closer to their homes in Inverness, Aberdeen and Dumfries. The Institution is located 3 miles north of Stirling near Bridge of Allan and is within a 40 mile radius of Dundee, Edinburgh, Perth and Glasgow.

2.2 The prison was built in the early 1970s and opened in 1975. Its design is that of a modern campus set in attractive grounds and it contrasts sharply with some of its Victorian counterparts elsewhere. It is situated in open countryside, though housing estates are now beginning to encroach to the north. Its current functions include:

2.2.1 The custody of female prisoners aged 16 years or over, awaiting trial or sentence from Courts throughout Scotland (the majority being from the West of Scotland and particularly from the Greater Glasgow area).

2.2.2 Custody of young and adult offenders including those previously held on remand in the Institution.

2.2.3 The supervision and accommodation of up to 16 female Category 'D' prisoners in an open facility at Heathervale House which came into operation in March 1996. The facility, which is located in the grounds of HMYOI Polmont, was formerly a TFF hostel for male YOs.

2.3 An additional function is the proposal to accommodate the male YOs in Bravo Block, though implementation has been delayed until at least October 1996.

2.4 The national drug dogs unit is also located in Cornton Vale though it is ultimately under the control of the Custody Directorate in SPS HQ.

3. POPULATION AND ACCOMMODATION

Population

3.1 Cornton Vale is designed to hold 219 prisoners in single cell accommodation though at the time of our inspection Bravo Block, which had a design capacity of 55, was unoccupied (see paragraph 3.4). In addition to the main accommodation at Cornton Vale, 6 prisoners were located in the TFF hostel/open prison Unit, Heathervale House. On the first full day of our inspection (Monday 20 May 1996) the population at lock-up, including those at Heathervale House, was 183 accommodated as follows:-

Location	Design Capacity	Population
Romeo Block	41	56
Papa Block	55	52
Sierra Block	27	21
Yankee Block	41	48
Heathervale House	16	6
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	180	183

3.2 Of the total population of 183, remand prisoners totalled 58 and a breakdown of the sentences being served by the remainder of the population was:-

	Adults	YOs
Without limit of time	-	1
Life	4	-
10 years and over	2	2
4 years and less than 10 years	16	3
2 years and less than 4 years	26	-
6 months and less than 2 years	28	6
3 months and less than 6 months	23	-
1 month and less than 3 months	5	3
Less than 1 month	5	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	109	16

3.3 All those being held on remand were security category B and a breakdown of the security categories of the convicted population was:-

	Adults	YOs
Category A	-	-
Category B	41	8
Category C	39	5
Category D	29	3
	—	—
	109	16
	—	—

Accommodation

3.4 The Institution's accommodation consists of 5 Blocks, though at the time of our inspection Bravo Block was unoccupied as it was in the process of being extensively refurbished pending the arrival of the male YOs.

3.5 The accommodation was not of the traditional prison gallery type but rather it was laid out in a campus style with each 2 storey Block being of similar layout and design. Each Block was divided up into a number of Units each of which in turn contained either 6 or 7 rooms, a kitchen, shower and toilet facilities and a small recreation/dining area. As part of our inspection every room in each Block was individually examined with regard to furnishings, decor and general condition.

3.6 **Papa Block** was used to house long-term prisoners and its 8 Units provided a total of 55 rooms intended for single occupation. The rooms in Units 5 and 6 had bunk beds and so could be doubled up if increased numbers so dictated. All the prisoners had keys to their own rooms and therefore had access to night sanitation. All of the rooms had adequate furniture, in addition to which each contained a wash-hand basin and electric power. The rooms were all in good condition but some of the recreation/dining rooms would have benefited from redecoration. Being at the top end of the regime, prisoners located in this Block could have their own bedding and curtains. Prior to the opening of Heathervale House, Unit 1 had been the Institution's TFF Unit and as such it was carpeted throughout.

However, we were disappointed to see that following a minor fire 2 years ago, nothing had been done to wash down the ceiling which had been blackened by smoke.

3.7 **Yankee Block** held short-term prisoners on the ground floor while on the upper floor there were long term prisoners (LTPs) who were waiting to move to Papa Block as part of the progression system. Yankee's 6 Units provided 41 rooms but doubling-up had become a regular feature since the closure of Bravo Block. Prisoners did not have keys for their doors but the LTPs did have access to night sanitation via an electronic locking system; those on the ground floor had been issued with chamber pots. The rooms on the ground floor tended to be rather scruffy with a shortage of clothes storage units, while those on the upper floor had much better decor and more personalisation of both rooms and communal areas.

3.8 **Sierra Block** was divided into 2 parts; 2 Units served as the new Addiction Support Unit (ASU) with the other 2 Units being the Induction and Assessment facility. The ASU had a total of 13 rooms and at the time of the inspection was housing 7 prisoners. There was no access to night sanitation and chamber pots had therefore been issued. The rooms had electric power but only those not on some form of medical observation were allowed to use it. All the rooms had recently been painted and each cell contained basic but ample furniture. The 2 recreation/dining areas doubled as classrooms and therefore had collapsible furniture to create more space.

3.9 The Induction Unit had 14 single rooms, 12 of which were occupied. One section had access to night sanitation, the other had chamber pots. As with the ASU, the area had recently been painted and the rooms had adequate furniture.

3.10 **Romeo Block** housed the remand prisoners with the 6 Units providing 41 rooms. The downstairs rooms all had single occupancy but upstairs all were doubled up except for one room which had 3 occupants. Staff tried to ensure that only the downstairs Units housed those who were on medical observation, but overcrowding had also resulted in observation prisoners being doubled up on the upper floor. Downstairs, the rooms contained only the most basic of furnishings with no mirrors. Although there was electric power in cell, none of the Remand prisoners was allowed to use it. The area had been redecorated about one year

ago and the paintwork was therefore quite fresh. The upstairs rooms were similar though some clothes storage facilities were available. The recreation/dining rooms were exceedingly spartan and very drab.

Comment

3.11 Although the individual rooms were generally of reasonable decor, there was nevertheless an overall impression that all the accommodation areas were drab and utilitarian. The sitting rooms in particular were very much in need of attention and in many of the rooms one or 2 items of furniture would have helped to improve their appearance. There was ample provision for showering, bathing and toilet needs but we were disappointed to learn that a large number of prisoners still had to rely on chamber pots for night sanitation, a situation exacerbated when the rooms had more than one occupant. We therefore suggest that action should be taken as follows:-

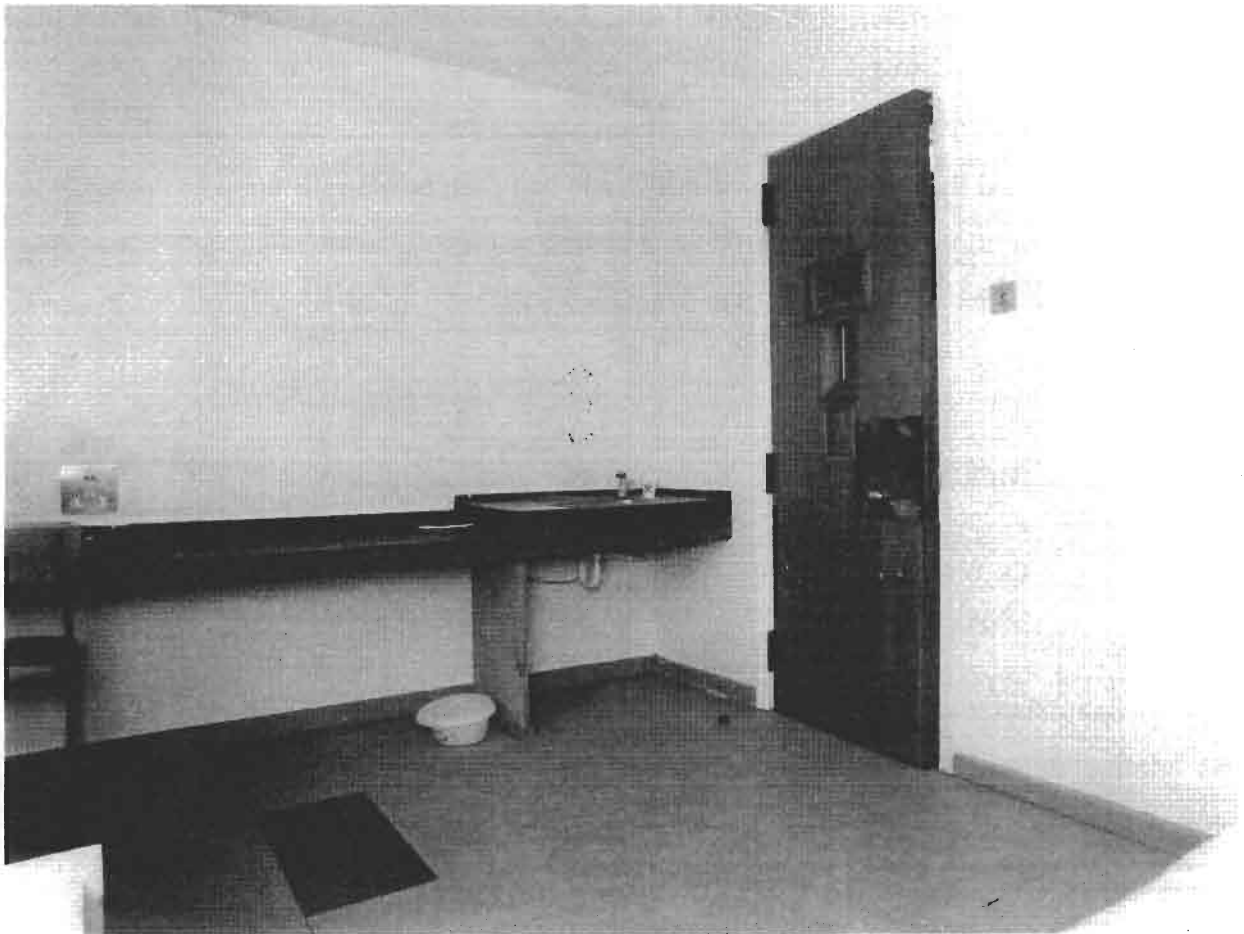
3.11.1 There should be an audit of all the furnishings in every room to ensure that each one is of a reasonable standard.

3.11.2 Efforts should be made to brighten up the sitting/dining rooms at the very least by redecoration where this is needed. We further suggest the provision of radios and reading material in all of these areas.

3.11.3 The fire damaged ceiling in Papa Block should be washed down.

3.11.4 The maximum possible number of prisoners should be permitted access to night sanitation.

4. CUSTODY ISSUES



Drug Abuse

4.1 Our 1991 inspection report noted that the number of drug abusers in the Institution had been increasing since at least 1989 and suggested that more intensive targeting measures were required. By May 1995 our short inspection was acknowledging that the drug abuse problem at Cornton Vale had grown and become even more serious and the number of women being admitted with connections to the drug culture was reported at that time as being "depressingly high."

4.2 Prior to this latest inspection, the briefings which we received referred again to the serious levels of drug abuse affecting the prisoner population but focused on the recent introduction of random mandatory drug testing (MDT) and the ASU. During the inspection, however, specialists such as the Senior Social Worker and psychiatrists painted rather a bleak picture by claiming that the vast majority of prisoners now had connections with drugs, a

view shared by the nursing staff and by the present Medical Officers (MOs) and the local General Practitioners who had preceded them. Previous estimates of 60% were in fact now considered as conservative and outdated.

4.3 We formed the view that the Health Centre had been bearing the brunt of this problem especially from those seeking treatment and medication for withdrawal and other drug associated problems. For example, the comparative rate of general prescriptions had been as follows.

Month	Total Number of Prescriptions
October 1993	2,670
October 1994	3,198
October 1995	5,528

4.4 Examination of the medical records for the previous year revealed that there had been 15 admissions for serious drug related seizures to Stirling Royal Infirmary. Drug induced epileptic fits were also said to be an extremely common occurrence within the Institution, especially in the Remand and Yankee Blocks.

4.5 The addictions worker, whose base was in Glasgow but who spent 3 days a week in the Institution, was direct in her views about the individuals whose 'throughcare' she was having to deal with. Her office was overwhelmed with case work and in her view, there was a need for at least one other addictions worker to work exclusively with Remand prisoners, where the problem was at its greatest. She also felt that the prescription of methadone as a replacement therapy was long overdue. The current lack of appropriate drug reduction protocols was, in her view, creating a considerable vacuum, when continuity and consistency in treatment were vital.

4.6 Since February 1996 the new ASU had been in operation in Sierra Block. It had been introduced as part of the package supporting random MDT and individuals undergoing the course were as far as possible kept apart from others, but the availability of a drug free area on completion of the programme had yet to become a reality - further details on the Unit are contained at paragraphs 6.86-91.

4.7 We also examined the MDT Unit which had been in operation for 3 months and were impressed with its initial organisation. Members of prison staff who had been assigned to it were well motivated and it appeared that testing of prisoners had got off to a reasonable start and was being treated with the appropriate sensitivity. Further detail and statistics are shown at Annexes 2 and 3 while Annex 4 contains a copy of the note given to those prisoners who test positive.

4.8 The view of the ASU staff was that drug problems were well entrenched before any remand or convicted prisoner ever arrived in Cornton Vale. Most prisoners arrived with drug habits, or their crimes were connected with drugs, or they had serious withdrawal problems. Indeed, many suffered from all three. This led in turn to many other difficulties in the prison, especially in the Remand Block. Drug abuse inside the prison was thought to be more prevalent at weekends, although it was said that the recent introduction of random MDT testing was proving to be a deterrent for some. However, the deterrent was judged to be more effective for those who were undergoing short sentences, as the punishment of extra days added to a long sentence had no immediate impact on LTPs. Staff also suspected that some women might be moving away from cannabis, as its presence in urine could be traced up to 30 days later and as a result, other substances with shorter detection times were becoming more popular. Others were expected to try to seek the prescription of painkiller opiate derivatives in an attempt to mask the effects of illicitly taken opiates.

4.9 The prisoners with whom we spoke - and we talked to a very large number - were extremely forthcoming about drugs. They indicated that nearly every prisoner at Cornton Vale had some previous connection with drugs. They also said that Remand prisoners had the biggest problems - especially with withdrawal symptoms either on, or shortly after arrival. They admitted that there was "a fair bit" of illegal drug abuse in the prison, especially at the weekends when boredom levels were at their highest. Some shared the view expressed by medical staff that cannabis was indeed becoming less popular because of MDT; others indicated that there were only a very few regular injectors in the Institution.

4.10 Many expressed serious disappointment at the lack of methadone treatment in the Institution, especially when it had been prescribed for them before imprisonment. All those prisoners to whom we spoke, emphasised the need for treatment in the prison which was consistent with what was received in their home areas. Annex 5 shows the approach currently being adopted by the MOs.

Comment

4.11 As the inspection developed, we began to recognise that the arrival of increasing numbers of inadequate and drug abusing and drug damaged women was having a very major impact on the establishment. The numbers had been edging up insidiously over the years - especially amongst younger females and Remands - and had now reached levels which were stretching the staff's attention and resources to the very limit.

4.12 The reported levels of illegal drug abuse inside the prison were worrying. We also suspect that fear of HIV and AIDS had led to some modification of injecting habits, though there was still thought to be a hard core of around 8 injectors.

4.13 The undermentioned substances were thought to be in most common use (but see also Annex 3):

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| • Cannabis | Widely available, but whose popularity may be diminishing because of MDT |
| • Temazepam | In common use. |
| • Heroin | 'Chased' or smoked, depending on the availability of other drugs and finances. |
| • Temgesic | A popular top up drug. |

4.14 We also consider that there could well be connections between drugs, drug dealing and the repeated whispers about bullying which were received throughout the inspection. In turn these may have tenuous links with some acts of self harm.

4.15 Anecdotal evidence from the addictions worker and from prisoners themselves described a high drug related death rate amongst prisoners on release; this may have been as a result of prisoners losing their tolerance to drugs whilst in prison, then overdosing in the first few days after release. This is an additional indicator of two salient facts. The first is that imprisonment inevitably cuts down on the level and frequency of drug abuse among many individuals. The second is that the periods following release and **admission** are probably the most life-threatening for addicts because of the effects of either a sudden increase or decrease respectively, in drug ingestion. The one positive view which we obtained was that very few prisoners started up a drug habit whilst in Cornton Vale. These observations, taken in conjunction with MDT and the opening of the ASU indicated that the thrust of the Institution's anti-drugs policy should be particularly directed towards the early stages of custody with periodic education throughout custody and further intensification in the pre-release period.

4.16 Much greater coordination of effort is also required to tackle the growth of this problem inside the prison which should in turn realise considerable benefits for prisoners so many of whom were in the Institution for minor or repeat offences connected with the drug culture.

4.17 We therefore **recommend** that:-

4.17.1 There should be SPS commissioned research into the scale and nature of drug abuse at Cornton Vale. This need not be costly or take much time, given the size of the population concerned. We are aware of anonymised HIV testing conducted by Drs Bird and Gore of the Medical Research Council at Cambridge.

4.17.2 The prison should re-examine its contacts with appropriate supporting agencies in the community with a view greatly to strengthening throughcare drugs links. Priority should be directed towards Greater Glasgow. The results of the research programme above would help determine the focus for this.

4.17.3 The Governor should review the Institution's anti-drugs strategy with a view to establishing a clear policy. In particular, there is need for much greater coordination and a truly multi-disciplinary approach throughout the establishment with better cross functional communication.

4.17.4 A further trained addictions worker should be recruited and given the priority task of focusing primarily on Remand prisoners.

4.18 We also suggest that the following are implemented as soon as is practicable:

4.18.1 More systematic basic and development training for the staff in the ASU based on their individual needs and those of the programme.

4.18.2 Consideration should be given to the introduction of a 'rolling' addiction support programme with the aim of greatly increasing throughput. Nearly every offender should be passing through a programme if present indications of drug abuse are accurate.

4.18.3 Drug free areas should be established in the Institution to help those who are seeking to address their addiction problems. Space for this should take priority over any allocation for male prisoner facilities.

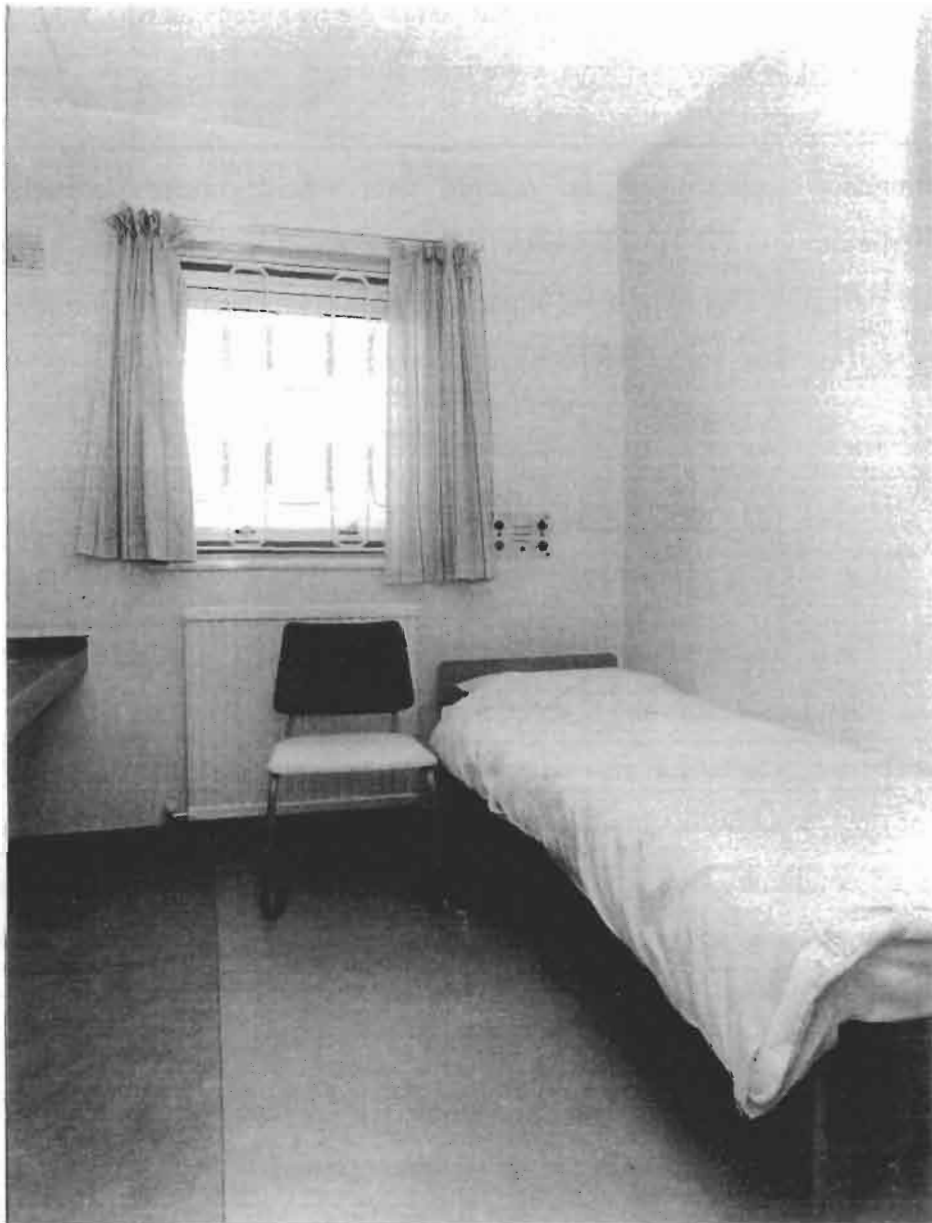
4.19 It should be noted that further recommendations are included in the sections dealing with suicide and healthcare (paragraphs 4.20-26 and Chapter 8).

Suicide

4.20 Prior to the 1995 inspection, the last recorded suicide in the Institution had been on 11 June 1986. Since June 1995, there had been 4 fatal and 2 serious attempted suicides in the space of 10 months. Each of the victims had been on remand, each attempt had taken place in Romeo Block and all had involved hanging. During our inspection a third attempt had

then taken place in Yankee Block which, but for the swift reactions of staff, could have been fatal. A list of relevant dates is shown at Annex 6.

4.21 At the time of our inspection, the Institutional total of those on some form of suicide observation was 4 adults and 9 YOs. In addition, 49 adults and 16 YOs were on medical observation. The average number of suicide and medical observations in the Remand Block had been running as high as 75-80% out of a population which averaged 54.



4.22 In considering the suicide prevention measures, we were impressed by the psychiatrists and their approach to suicide risk management and assessment. Indeed, our conclusion in this particular area was that the Institution and its prisoners could not have been

better served by these specialists and the return of the psychologist after more than a year's absence should greatly enhance future team work.

4.23 The deliberations of the Suicide Risk Management Group were assessed to be of a reasonable standard. We also noted that in March 1996 there had been extensive deliberations involving the Governor and 8 Primary Care Specialists whose primary pre-occupation was with the establishment of a therapeutic regime. Consciousness among staff about the dangers of suicide was as well developed as we had seen elsewhere though levels of anxiety, as a result of so many incidents, were naturally very high.

4.24 Contingency arrangements for dealing with suicides were commendably well organised, particularly in the Health Centre where we noted that one nurse had psychiatric qualifications. Crash packs (which are advanced first aid kits designed to deal quickly with the first stages of medical emergencies) were readily available. A defibrillator was also on hand.

Comment

4.25 It is for Fatal Accident Inquiries (FAIs) to determine the individual circumstances and possible cause of sudden deaths and to make recommendations. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that this alarming cluster has erupted amongst a very small population and within a very short space of time, we have made some subsidiary recommendations which are based on the observations of conditions which we found across the Institution and include note of the extensive deliberations which involved the Governor and the Primary Care Specialists. We therefore **recommend** that:-

4.25.1 An investigation is made into the provision of appropriate Bail Hostel accommodation, with priority given to female remands from the Greater Glasgow area, in order to reduce the numbers placed at risk in closed conditions.

4.25.2 Psychiatric screening should be provided in some Courts - for example in Greater Glasgow. A Community Psychiatric Nurse, who could undertake the early

screening of vulnerable and disturbed individuals and be in touch with the Douglas Inch Clinic and other relevant specialists, could make a considerable difference in anticipating and diverting serious problems which might not be otherwise identified until after admission. A pilot scheme for female offenders might be the starting point.

4.25.3 In the absence of comprehensive out of cell activities, the provision of in cell television for female remand prisoners should be instituted. (This need not be the thin edge of the wedge for elsewhere.)

4.25.4 A pilot scheme involving a number of the recommendations contained in two recent reports on suicide prevention by Professor John Gunn and Dr Kevin Power, should be introduced soon - particularly those relating to the integration (rather than isolation) of those known to be potentially suicidal. If a more integrated approach is adopted, then this may also encourage potentially suicidal prisoners to make their feelings known; we were told that some say nothing for fear of the conditions associated with being placed on strict suicide supervision.

4.25.5 Remand prisoners should be provided with a much more therapeutic regime (see also paragraph 6.19). In particular, time for morbid contemplation should be much reduced, **especially around the weekend**. This is one of our fundamental and most important recommendations for the Institution. Opportunities for regular exercise in the open air should also be encouraged amongst this group.

4.25.6 Special arrangements for the induction of Remand prisoners should be made.

4.25.7 The timing of the delivery of prisoners to Cornton Vale should be reviewed in conjunction with the Police. Too often prisoners are reaching Cornton Vale at the end of a run and often late into the evening, when there are difficulties in effecting proper medical and psychiatric screening. (See also paragraphs 5.19-20)

4.25.8 Wherever possible, a nurse who has psychiatric qualifications or suicide awareness training should be on duty in Reception for screening.

4.25.9 The Institution's anti-bullying strategies should be properly implemented, monitored and evaluated. This applies particularly to the Remand Block.

4.25.10 All Remand prisoners at Cornton Vale should be allocated a properly trained Personal Officer.

4.25.11 Remand prisoners should have greater access to telephones and in a place which affords greater privacy. An increase from one to 2 telephones - as is now being considered by Management - would be a good start.

4.26 In addition to these recommendations we suggest that:-

4.26.1 Access to local Samaritans and other women's Groups should be greatly improved. A dedicated line for access to the Samaritans might also be considered.

4.26.2 The number of prison visitors should be increased. Both Visiting Committees (VCs) might be able to help recruit volunteer visitors.

4.26.3 There should be a systematic and comprehensive process to analyse lessons learned after any serious incident of self harm.

Psychological Aftermath of Suicides

4.27 Recent suicides have greatly disturbed many individuals and are continuing to do so. Whilst some arrangements for staff and prisoner counselling had been made by Management, we found that these tended to be somewhat ad hoc. We therefore **recommend** that local

arrangements are reviewed and standardised: (indeed this service might be developed at national level by the recently appointed Head of Psychological Services).

Transfer of Male YOs

4.28 In order to maximise the use of the prison estate and because of overcrowding problems elsewhere in the prison system, the Prisons Board decided in 1995 to section off an accommodation Block within Cornton Vale (Bravo Block) to house 55 security category D male YOs for whom a location was needed after the closure of Castle Huntly as an open YOI.

4.29 In parallel, our thematic study on "The Custody and Training of Female Prisoners and Young Offenders in Scotland" which was also published in 1995, said:

"In formulating our thoughts and recommendations, we were aware that should they all be implemented, the situation might arise whereby Cornton Vale could be operating uneconomically at a figure well below capacity. We were aware also that a number of male establishments presently suffer from overcrowding. Although we indicated in Chapter 7 that we were not in favour of mixed prisons, we do accept that a combination of the two factors noted above could result in a situation whereby the Service was left with no option but to locate male prisoners in vacant accommodation at Cornton Vale."

4.30 The original plan was that the YOs would be transferred to Cornton Vale in January 1996, but local staffing difficulties had contributed to a delay in that move until some time in the autumn of 1996. Given the potential impact of this unique initiative on the prison and because of the concern expressed to us by many members of staff, prisoners and others about the arrival of the YOs, we felt it appropriate to examine in some detail the prison's plan for the integration and management of this new population.

4.31 In preparation for housing the YOs, a 3 metre metal fence had been erected to separate the YOs from the women and a new reception facility had been built. Alterations had also been made to the Central Block to provide a visit room and toilet and to add additional

security doors. The total cost of these preparations was in the region of £150,000. Plans were also in hand to partition an industrial workshop to form a group room and industrial cleaning classroom.

4.32 The selection criteria for the YOs are that they should be serving sentences of over one year and up to Life imprisonment, that they should have a minimum of 6 months and no more than 2 years left to serve, that they should be of the lowest security category, not an appellant, not a sex offender, not facing any serious outstanding charges, not an escape or abscond risk and not the subject of serious reports of indiscipline in the 6 months prior to transfer. Staff reports must also be good. The YOs would be transferred from Polmont and Dumfries Young Offenders' Institutions.

4.33 It was intended that the staffing complement for the Block would be one Shift Supervisor and 4 Officers. Staff had been selected to work with the YOs, but at the time of our inspection, not all had yet received training to equip them for their new roles.

4.34 In terms of regime, it is anticipated that the YOs would have access to education, appropriate offending behaviour programmes, work and recreation. They would also be permitted home leave and local leave consistent with the privileges available to offenders in open conditions. They would share the prison's central services with the female population - ie medical, administration, catering, gymnasium, some work opportunities and the chaplaincy centre for church services.

Comment

4.35 We had a considerable number of concerns in relation to the planning material with which we were provided in relation to the transfer of the male YOs and about the robustness of some of the assumptions on which the local plans had been developed. The following examples represent some of those concerns.

4.36 We were not optimistic about the prison's ability to offer meaningful sentence planning or offending behaviour and pre-release programmes for the YOs when none (except a very recent cognitive skills programme) had existed for some time, for the women.

4.37 Given the gaps in staff training provision during the last 14 months and the absence of training in skills for delivering the opportunity agenda, we did not consider that the staff had been well prepared to take on their new role.

4.38 We were also unable to satisfy ourselves that there would *actually* (rather than aspirationally), be sufficient work places either internally or externally to employ the YOs. We were disappointed to note that the biggest internal work group comprised a proposed party of 15 in the gardens area which would be made available to the YOs at the expense of a longstanding and popular work opportunity for the female population, who would as a result be left with only 2 places on the grounds party. In terms of educational opportunities we have expressed concern that those which currently exist for the women are inadequate and will require a good deal of work before they are up to speed (see paragraphs 6.97-106). The arrival of the males will not improve the situation.

4.39 We had anxieties about the fact that the YOs' accommodation can only be accessed by walking through the heart of the main prison close to female accommodation Blocks. The proposed visits area for the YOs is also in the centre of the prison which means that their visitors would also have to be escorted through the prison, an arrangement which we consider to be most unsatisfactory on grounds of security. Both of these factors also concerned a number of the women prisoners who expressed anxiety at the possibility of suffering 'cat calls' and personal remarks and being stared at. This was a special concern for those who had experienced abusive relationships with males. In order to remove one of these potential problems, we wrote to the Governor and to SPS HQ suggesting that consideration should be given to using the former muster room close to the main Gate which had been earmarked for visits by social workers, lawyers and other officials as the visits area for the male YOs.

4.40 The new demands which will be placed on the prison's infrastructure and resources will lead to a considerable strain on areas which at present, in our opinion, are not sufficiently

prepared or robust to cope. There are also gaps in the plans - including, for example, clear and agreed protocols with the Governors of the sending establishments. Overall, given the cost, complexity and potential impact on the prison and its female population of the proposed transfer of 55 YOs, we felt that with the benefit of hindsight, there ought to have been a national steering group to oversee the planning process.

4.41 Much has changed in Cornton Vale over the last 12 months which could not have been anticipated at the time when the decision was made to transfer male YOs into the prison. Nor did SPS HQ have the benefit of a full inspection report as part of their background planning - no such report had been prepared since 1991. We also believe that the serious and increasing drug and mental health problems among the population in Cornton Vale has become overwhelming over the last year and this in addition to the spate of suicides, has made a considerable contribution to the significant change in the prison's circumstances now, as against those of 12 months ago.

4.42 In view of these radically changed circumstances and until a number of fundamental issues connected with regime development, staff training, staffing levels, healthcare, addressing the prison's drug culture and identifying and meeting the needs of its existing female population are addressed and showing *tangible* progress, then in our opinion, Cornton Vale is not yet in a position effectively to manage the YOs. We therefore **recommend** that SPS HQ urgently review the timing of the transfer of male YOs to the Institution. In making this recommendation we nevertheless fully acknowledge the pressures which the SPS is currently facing in relation to overcrowding.

5. SECURITY, DISCIPLINE AND OPERATIONS

Security

5.1 In the year prior to our inspection there had been no escapes, though one adult prisoner had absconded. Contingency plans were of a good standard but we had some concerns about individual security issues and although for obvious reasons these are not rehearsed in detail in this report, they have been raised separately with SPS HQ and the Governor.

5.2 We were satisfied with the conduct and recording of cell searches in the establishment. These were carried out regularly and were consistent with the appropriate Operating Standards.

Control

5.3 Little or no tension was apparent between staff and prisoners, though there was a feeling of shared anxiety which was especially apparent in the Remand Block - mainly as a result of the recent suicides. Prisoners were nevertheless complimentary about staff attitudes during and after these tragedies.

5.4 The number of prisoners on some form of regular observation had risen significantly, especially in the Remand Block (see paragraph 4.21). This had exacerbated local staffing problems but in response, the Governor had allocated a temporary increase of one Officer on each shift in that Block. Unfortunately, this had had a negative impact on TOIL and added to staffing pressures elsewhere. We nevertheless **recommend** that an additional Officer is permanently added to each shift in the Remand Block given its pressing and complex problems.

Discipline

5.5 During the year there had been 11 assaults by adult prisoners on other prisoners. Assaults involving YOs had totalled 12.

Orderly Room

5.6 An average of 13 prisoners were being placed on report each week. Procedures were being carried out in accordance with SPS policy, with the Governor taking the Orderly Room whenever possible. We were satisfied that he was being consistent, fair and understanding with those who appeared in front of him. We strongly suggest, however, that training and supervision should be given to those Officers responsible for recording statements and details during the adjudication process as we found cases in which written evidence was so brief as to be meaningless.

Segregation Cells

5.7 Since our last inspection there had been little change to the 2 sets of separate cells located in Sierra and Yankee Blocks. Each comprised 2 strong and 2 silent cells with separate toilet and shower arrangements. Both sets of cells had an adjacent exercise area and we suggest that depending on individual circumstances, every effort should be made to allow prisoners located there a period of daily outdoor exercise.

5.8 At the time of inspection, 2 prisoners (one adult and one YO) were being held under Rule 80 of the 1994 Rules. That said, both sets of cells were also being used to locate prisoners on strict suicide supervision (SSS) and other forms of observation, because of intermittent overcrowding in the main accommodation areas. This was placing a significant strain on staff who were consequently required to undertake 15 minute observations 24 hours a day in addition to normal duties. It also meant that vulnerable prisoners were placed in accommodation which did little to ameliorate their distress given that the regime was negligible with out of cell time and therefore human contact, limited by staff availability. In

our view, the separate cells area should not be used for housing prisoners on observation status other than in the most exceptional circumstances (see paragraph 6.30).

Gate

5.9 The Gate had separate electronically controlled entrances for pedestrians and vehicles and closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras covered the main entrance to the prison.

5.10 The Gate lodge was staffed by 2 Officers on early and late shifts and by one Officer during the night. It was well lit, had good ventilation, was in a reasonable state of decoration and had adequate facilities for staff. No prisoners were allowed into the Gate lodge and all cleaning was carried out by staff.

5.11 The Gate staff carried out a number of functions including issuing personal radios to staff, keeping contact by radio with prison vehicles, searching vehicles entering and leaving the establishment and recording the movement of personnel into and out of the prison. A new key safe had recently been installed which had made the issue, return and check of the keys more efficient. A copy of the establishment's Contingency Plan was available in case of emergency.

5.12 We noted that relevant documentation was being completed, though on some occasions full details of the attendance of part-time staff were not recorded. Otherwise, we were satisfied with what we saw of the operation of the Gate.

5.13 During our inspection of the establishment we had an opportunity to witness staff dealing with their colleagues and the general public and we were impressed with the courteous manner with which they treated everyone.

Comment

5.14 Problems in continuity of staffing at the Gate had arisen as a consequence of general staff shortages and the presence of a large number of inexperienced staff in the Operations

group. As a result, we had some concerns about the level of training and experience of some of those staff who had been detailed to Gate duties and we have therefore suggested that this is an issue which requires to be addressed by management - see paragraph 9.18. We have also written to the Governor suggesting that there should always be at least one experienced member of staff on duty in the Gate at all times.

Reception

5.15 The Reception area, which is located on the ground floor of the Administration Block and near to the Gate complex, was in a good position to receive admissions from vehicles. All prisoner movement in and out of the establishment was processed through the Reception area which was staffed by 2 Officers on each of the 2 main shifts.

5.16 The facilities for prisoners at the time of inspection included 20 cubicles, 2 showers, one bath, a medical room, laundry, toilets and clothing stores. All were in a reasonable state of repair and decoration and the appropriate notices were displayed. Staff facilities, which included an office with a good view of the main area, were considered to be adequate. Three prisoners were employed in the Reception area on a shift basis and were responsible for laundering prisoners' personal clothing and for keeping the holding area clean and tidy.

5.17 On admission, prisoners were entered on to the computerised prisoners' records system before photographs and fingerprints were taken, together with the completion of other documentation procedures. Additionally, each prisoner was given a shower and was seen by a nurse.

5.18 Admissions could number up to 10-15 at any one time with most coming from Courts in the West of Scotland and particularly from the Greater Glasgow area. Admissions often tended to arrive late in the evening, which also meant late working for Reception staff. (See also paragraph 4.25.7.)

Comment

5.19 We gained a favourable impression of the Reception facilities and noted that further improvements were planned, including the creation of an information area and the provision of extra showers. Nevertheless, it was clear that the Reception staff were often under time pressure because of the present delivery system from Courts in Greater Glasgow. Despite the efforts of staff to be helpful and considerate to prisoners, arrivals late in the evening often meant that the admission process had to be rushed and that prisoners were not interviewed in as much depth as was desirable. The entire process of settling in to the Institution could thus be hurried and fragmented at a time which is invariably critical to the prisoners' entire approach to imprisonment.

Escorts

5.20 Cornton Vale has responsibility for escorting prisoners throughout Scotland and given that its catchment area is so large, the escort commitment can at times be considerable. The prison has one car and one van for that purpose but has to hire additional vehicles or permit staff to use their own cars at times when escort demands are high.

5.21 Although it is not our usual practice closely to examine the variable provision for escorts *et al* in the complement estimator, we did so on this occasion given the reported difficulties in covering some escorts. We found a number of recording errors in weekly returns which cumulatively, may well have had the effect of underestimating variable needs in a number of areas.

5.22 We also found that there was no systematic management scrutiny of the use of hours and thus no analysis of either the accuracy of data or the efficiency of staff deployment. We therefore strongly suggest a comprehensive review of manpower returns, the implementation of effective monitoring at management level and a review of the training needs of Supervisors in relation to the completion of returns.

5.23 Under normal circumstances staff from the Operations Group would undertake the bulk of escorts. However, the increasing number of admissions to outside hospital has meant that Residential staff have also regularly been called upon to help meet the demand. We were concerned to find that difficulties in providing sufficient trained staff to undertake escorts had resulted, on occasion, in the use of untrained probationary staff in charge of escorts. This practice is not acceptable and should stop.

Prisoners Grievance Procedure

5.24 We found that there was a number of deficiencies in terms of recording the issue and return of forms relating to the Prisoners' Grievance Procedure and that as few as 61% of complaints were being answered within published timescales. A new register for forms was however, due to be introduced on 1 June 1996. We gained the impression that because the grievance procedure was not given the priority which it deserved, prisoners had begun to lose faith in its credibility. We have therefore suggested to the Governor that grievances are addressed thoroughly and timeously and that prisoners are not discouraged in any way from using the system appropriately. The Internal Complaints Committee, which was chaired by the Deputy Governor and met as demand dictated, processed 2 complaints during the 12 months prior to our inspection.

Drug Dogs Unit

5.25 A Drug Dogs Unit is housed within the perimeter of the establishment. As a national resource it is controlled and tasked by SPS HQ. Currently it comprises 3 dogs, under the care of one Officer dog handler. A member of Cornton Vale staff assists during the handler's absences.

5.26 In 1995-96 the dogs visited all establishments in Scotland, during the course of which 90 finds were recorded. It is understood that the Unit's cost effectiveness is under review following the introduction of random MDT.

6. REGIMES

Remand Population

(i) Introduction

6.1 Cornton Vale's Remand population was housed in 'Romeo' Block which contained single cell accommodation for 41 prisoners. On the first full day of our inspection, the population was 56 with all upstairs rooms doubled up except one which contained 3 occupants (see also paragraph 3.10).

6.2 The Remand Unit's daily routine was very much influenced by the nature of its population. On 22 May, of a total of 54 prisoners in the Block, 18 were the subject of 15 minute observation, 17 of 60 minute observation, 2 were on strict suicidal supervision and 4 on basic suicidal supervision which meant that nearly 76% of the population was on some form of medical or suicide observation. Since 1 March 1996, the total on observation has been as high as 93% and had not dropped below 61%.

6.3 The overwhelming majority had been placed on observation status because of physical and emotional problems connected with drug withdrawal, and the demands placed on Discipline and specialist staff in relation to their care had become more and more demanding. The staff were in effect, trying to manage what amounted to an annex to the Health Centre, for a population suffering a combination of poly drug abuse, behavioural difficulties, mental health and multiple social and personal problems. This was quite apart from the additional pressures on prisoners of awaiting Court appearances and separation from family and especially children (see paragraph 4.21).

6.4 Despite the difficulties, we were nevertheless impressed by the commitment and care invariably displayed by staff in their concern to provide as well as possible for the needs of the Remand population. Nevertheless, we were concerned that most had not received systematic and recent training appropriate to their role in such areas as poly drug abuse, drug withdrawal (drug induced epileptic seizures are a common occurrence among the Remands),

harm reduction, suicide risk management, basic counselling, interviewing skills, the role and responsibilities of the Personal Officer and so on.

(ii) Prisoners on Observation

6.5 We were concerned that prisoners on observation were 2 and sometimes 3 to a cell and without routine or ready access to toilet facilities. None of this group was permitted access to the night sanitation facilities which meant that both in the day time during periods of lock up and throughout the night, chamber pots had to be used. Given the distressing physical symptoms which can frequently accompany drug withdrawal, we considered this situation highly undesirable. There was provision for night shift staff to go to the Remand Block to allow access to the toilet in exceptional circumstances, but we did not consider that this went anywhere near addressing the basic need.

6.6 We were also concerned to find that it was common for male Officers on the night shift and during patrol periods routinely to undertake observation of female prisoners (without a female Officer presence). This was a breach of basic privacy and decency which at the same time, left male staff particularly vulnerable to accusations of impropriety.

6.7 In terms of daily structured activities, we found the regime for Remand prisoners generally - but particularly for those on observation - to be very limited and lacking in the kind of focus required for the support of a vulnerable population. When staffing permitted, an Officer was permanently allocated to Unit 1 which housed the potentially suicidal and most fragile women, but his/her input was limited to close supervision and chatting to them. In other parts of the Block, staff were equally tied by both the demands created by the observation process and simply by meeting the daily needs of a busy Remand facility. Over the past year, their problems have also been exacerbated by staff shortages which had resulted in frequent lock ups during the day for the Remand population.

6.8 There was no integrated multi-disciplinary team approach to the management of prisoners on observation nor were there any regular case conferences held in the Block involving the bulk of Discipline Officers, to discuss women and girls with particular

problems and to advise and support staff in the most difficult task of managing this group. A weekly multi-disciplinary meeting chaired by the Social Work Manager was held to discuss matters of mutual concern to the various functions represented. Discussion also took place of some vulnerable prisoners but the forum was not constituted for that purpose alone and included only representative staff from Yankee and Romeo.

6.9 Except for a weekly visit from Alcoholics Anonymous, there was no involvement by appropriate outside agencies including for example, the Samaritans, Rape Crisis, Citizens Advice, Battered Women's Groups and so on. The co-operative participation of such experienced and respected organisations would have gone some way to contributing to the range of responses needed to address the varying problems presented by this population.

6.10 There had been no psychology services to the Remand Unit for some 12 months (see also paragraphs 8.34-38).

(iii) Routine and Regime

6.11 The day for the bulk of Remand prisoners begins at 0700 when they are unlocked for breakfast. Thereafter, each day (Monday-Friday) has 2 main periods of lock up amounting in total to 3½ hours - ie 2 hours in the morning and 1½ hours in the afternoon or one hour in the evening to facilitate visits. This means that those prisoners not on observation can have a maximum 11 hours out of cell each day during the week. However, staff shortages over the past 12 months had reportedly resulted in more frequent periods of lock up (particularly at the weekends) which had reduced out of cell time. Romeo staff were committed to visits supervision as an out of Block activity. Although electric power was available in every cell in the Remand Block, prisoners were not allowed to use it on the grounds that they might tamper with the electric socket and harm themselves.

6.12 Recreation largely centred round the television in each sitting room and though there was a selection of board games available, they were rarely used. A physical education (PE) class was available each morning but many of the prisoners were either too unwell or too lethargic to take advantage of the opportunity. In any event, the timing of the class also

clashed with medical appointment times and therefore take up was low. Two education classes and one cookery class were offered each week, but again, take up was variable; a visit to the hairdresser was more popular and available once a week. Outside exercise was confined to a fenced yard and made available on request.

6.13 There was one cardphone located in the Block but sited in a busy location which lacked privacy. We were informed that because demand for use of the telephone was so great, bullying for telephone time was not uncommon, despite the existence of a call booking system.

6.14 We were satisfied with arrangements in terms of frequency of kit changes and of bedding and towels. Women could wash items of personal clothing in the Block but we received complaints from them about difficulty in getting access to one of the 3 washing machines and then in being able to dry clothing.

6.15 Meal times were the same as for the rest of the prison ie 0700 for breakfast, 1215 for lunch and 1615 for tea (the latter time failed to meet the evening meal time of no earlier than 1700 recommended in SPS Operating Standards - but see paragraph 7.6). Visits were available daily Monday-Friday for up to a maximum of one hour (depending on demand) but not at weekends. Visitors were limited to a total of 4 people at each visit.

Comment

6.16 Given the nature of the Remand population and the significant problems which have arisen among them over the last 12 months, we consider that a much more co-ordinated and multi-disciplinary approach is needed and should begin at the point of admission to the prison. For example, we have recommended elsewhere in this report (see paragraph 4.25.8) that a nurse trained in psychiatric problems or suicide awareness should, where possible, be part of the assessment process in Reception and should have sufficient time properly to interview and screen all admissions.

6.17 We have already recommended that there should be a structured induction period for Remand prisoners (see paragraph 4.25.6) which should ensure that those individuals are **thoroughly** briefed about what to expect of the Remand period. In addition we suggest that at an early stage, they should also automatically be interviewed by a prison social worker - this does not currently happen. At present, should a prisoner have the misfortune to arrive at the prison not long before lock up (see paragraphs 5.19-20), then she will inevitably receive a very short introduction to the prison before she is allocated a cell - almost certainly a double one and quite likely with a stranger. None of these experiences is conducive to the care of the vulnerable and distressed, or those in the early stages of drug withdrawal.

6.18 As part of the multi-disciplinary approach to the management of the Remand population, there should be a careful assessment of individual needs (the numbers are small enough to make this viable) with individual care plans being developed for the most vulnerable. Discipline Officers should be fully involved in that process with in addition, the introduction of properly structured domestic meetings at which they can share their concerns, draw on help from specialist colleagues for individual and group counselling for prisoners and agree a common approach to the management of individual prisoners.

6.19 We have already recommended (at paragraph 4.25.5) that Remand prisoners should be provided with a much more therapeutic regime, especially around the weekends. In our view, management should be adopting a proactive role in revitalising the regime and measures which could be taken include:-

6.19.1 A reduction in the frequency of daytime lock-ups because of staff shortages - the addition of a member of staff on each shift should help (see paragraph 5.4).

6.19.2 Maximising the amount of out of cell time and finding a range of structured purposeful activities for the prisoners, including consideration of the provision of work opportunities - eg a craft workshop for charity - a revitalised recreation programme, an opportunity for outdoor exercise beyond the yard,

individual and group counselling and participation by appropriate outside groups in the life of the Block.

6.19.3 The introduction of a listener or buddy scheme for prisoners.

6.19.4 Attempts gradually to reduce the number of women on medical observation in the future.

6.19.5 A re-examination of the policy of denying all observation prisoners access to night sanitation (including those in Yankee - see paragraph 6.40) with a view to maximising access to this facility. We understand the security and supervisory problems attached to this suggestion, but do not consider them to be insurmountable.

6.19.6 Given that electric power in cells (EPIC) is, for safety reasons, fitted with a residual current device which switches power off when the current is tripped, a reconsideration of the policy of denying all Remand prisoners access to EPIC.

6.19.7 Continuity of staffing in the Remand Block with gaps in staff training being addressed.

6.20 In addition to the specific points outlined above, we suggest that the practice of male staff undertaking regular observation of women prisoners at night and during patrol periods should also be reviewed. As a separate issue, we consider that the same problems arise in respect of female Officers observing male prisoners in the same circumstances and we have therefore written to SPS HQ suggesting that the present practice throughout the SPS is worthy of reconsideration.

6.21 As noted above, the Remand population is complex and difficult to manage but we found, once again, that staff were invariably keen to make the very best of their resources and were exceptionally committed and hard working. There is much to be done in Romeo and

we trust that our suggestions for revitalising the regime for these prisoners and supporting staff in a tangible way will go some way to address the deficits.

Induction and Assessment

6.22 As part of the strategic planning process, a decision had been made to open an Induction Unit for all prisoners serving over 30 days and for all LTPs (long term for these purposes being 12 months and over). Units 3 and 4 (14 cells) in Sierra Block were therefore earmarked for the purpose. The aim of the induction period was to provide a structured and detailed assessment of each prisoner, to provide a range of basic information, to allow prisoners a settling in period and to introduce them to Cornton Vale. At the time of our inspection, the induction period lasted for 5 days for short term prisoners and 10 days for LTPs. The Unit was opened on 26 February 1996 and had a total complement of 4 Officers.

6.23 Not long after its opening however, it had become clear that there were insufficient prisoners who met the criteria to fill the 14 cell spaces. As a result and in addition, because of both prevailing overcrowding in Yankee and Papa Blocks and a local staff dispute, it was agreed to use Unit 4 to house category C prisoners with jobs. Induction for short term prisoners continued on an 8-5 basis with the prisoners returning to Yankee Block at the end of the day. LTPs continued to be admitted to the Unit on a residential basis.

6.24 The Induction Unit provided a rolling programme which covered subjects from HIV/AIDS education to fire training, relaxation techniques and the operation of the Personal Officer scheme; for LTPs, the programme also covered subjects such as parole and sentence planning. Individual interviews were given to the LTPs by social work, education and industrial staff and group presentations were also made by them to the short termers.

Comment

6.25 We were most impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment of the Induction staff to try to provide a good service. However, they expressed reservations which echoed our own, in relation to the comprehensiveness of the design and pre-planning of the induction

programme, the lack of appropriate staff training, the absence of any form of evaluation of the effectiveness of the process and the absence of a formal assessment element to the induction process for LTPs.

6.26 We fully recognise that given the Unit's short life, teething problems will form an inevitable part of the experience of finding the right approach. That said, we could find no formal plans to undertake an early review of the operation of the Unit and this was of concern, as staff did not feel properly equipped to deal with the range and complexity of issues which were being raised by the prisoners in response to some of the sessions. With the benefit of hindsight, it may perhaps have been helpful for the Cornton Vale staff to have visited a number of other Induction Units before opening their own, in order to examine the kind of training and operational issues which they might have been expected to encounter and therefore to plan accordingly.

6.27 In our view, the operation of the Induction Unit should now be the subject of early review in order to support the staff there and to address weaknesses in design which without attention, may quickly become more serious problems. A monitoring and evaluation system must be introduced and staff should be provided with the training which they need to undertake their roles effectively.

6.28 If the Unit is to be used to begin the formal assessment procedures for LTPs rather than simply providing an induction process, systems will have to be introduced for so doing.

Yankee Block

6.29 At the time of our visit, this Block held both YO and adult convicted prisoners of security categories B and C. The Block comprised 41 rooms in 5 Units, as well as a segregation Unit containing 2 'silent' and 2 'strong' cells. On the first full day of our inspection, the population totalled 48 of whom 2 were subject to SSS, 4 to basic suicidal supervision (BSS), 4 on 15 minute observation and 11 on 60 minute observation.

6.30 Those on strict and intermediate suicidal supervision (ISS) were routinely located in the Segregation Unit which was also used to accommodate Remand prisoners on the same supervisions if there was no room for them in the Remand Unit - but see paragraph 5.8. Prisoners located on observation in the Segregation Unit were locked up for most of the day unless an Officer could be spared for one-to-one supervision. Access to daily outside exercise was again dependent on staff availability. No multi-disciplinary case conferences were held in Yankee to discuss the routine management of these prisoners; staff relied on information passed during shift hand over meetings or at fortnightly divisional meetings. A representative of the Yankee staff attended the weekly multi-disciplinary meeting in the Health Centre.

6.31 Because of the number of prisoners who were subject to drug induced epileptic seizures, a number of cells on the ground floor of the Block had mattresses on the floor. There were 7 cells doubled up with observation prisoners at the time of our inspection and some 80% of the Yankee population was in receipt of medication. Efforts were made to house all observation prisoners on the ground floor with the other prisoners upstairs - but overcrowding meant that this was not always possible.

6.32 All admissions were seen individually for about 5-10 minutes for a brief introduction to Yankee to identify pressing problems. All first offender admissions were interviewed in more detail by an Officer on the day following their arrival and given a verbal briefing on the operation of the Block and generally what to expect of custody. All of those serving sentences of over 30 days (except those on 15 minute observation) could expect to be given a place on the induction programme (see paragraph 6.22). The comprehensive prisoners' information pack was available for prisoners to see, but there was no separate information pamphlet available on Yankee itself.

6.33 Of the population of 48, some 16 prisoners had jobs. Four were domestic cleaners within the Block and the other 12 left the Block to attend their workplaces between 0830 and 1215 hours and again between 1330 and 1615 hours. Prisoners could also attend education classes, cognitive skills training and PE (which was compulsory for the YOs). For those who had work and were not on observation, there was access to approximately 7 hours of

structured activity Monday to Friday and a total of about 11 hours out of cell. Both of these figures fall below the recommended levels in SPS Operating Standards. Structured activity time for observation prisoners however, was severely limited and out of cell time varied according to staff availability and observation status.

6.34 The staff complement for the Block was a Shift Supervisor and 5 Officers though one Officer was also the cognitive skills trainer, one was seconded to the Operations Group for part of the early and late shifts and the Unit 6 Officer acted as the escort for all accompanied movements out of the Block (which resulted in frequent absences). The resulting pressure on the Supervisor and 2 or 3 staff when taking into account absences for meal breaks, meetings and the demands of frequent observations and of separate cell prisoners, we thought was unreasonable. Yankee staff also provided supervision for the Orderly Room which was held in the separate cells. The staff had received no systematic or recent training to enable them to deal with the kind of problems presented by prisoners on observation.

6.35 Yankee was considered to be the first stage in an internal progression system with movement to the next level (ie Units 5 and 6 in Papa Block) depending on good behaviour and attitude and holding a security category C. Inside the Block, it was also possible to 'progress' from the ground floor to the upper floor where access to night sanitation, EPIC and cell hobbies was the norm (though cell hobbies were currently confined to knitting). One of the upstairs Units also had communal access to satellite television though all Units had a TV and video which was the main focus of recreation. At the time of our visit there was no community involvement.

6.36 We were concerned about the absence of a structured regime for the LTPs who were held upstairs in Yankee. This group had been overlooked in the pressure to focus on observation prisoners and they complained to us about the loss of the privilege of making their own meals (the Homemaker scheme) and the absence of evening classes; we were inclined to agree that there was considerable scope for a thorough review of their limited regime.

6.37 There was one cardphone in the Block, access to which was largely controlled via a booking system, particularly at evenings and weekends when calls were cheaper and therefore demand was higher. Although the phone was switched on all day, it was poorly sited in a busy and noisy area which offered little privacy. Prisoners in the Block had standard access to visits (see paragraph 6.121 for details).

6.38 Meal times were 0700 for breakfast, 1230 for lunch and 1615-1700 for tea though during the latter period most women had to eat and be escorted for medication, which meant that tea was a rushed affair.

6.39 We were satisfied that prisoners had ample opportunity to change kit, bedding and towels and that they could launder personal items in the Units without difficulty. That said, there seemed to be ongoing problems with the washing machines which were reported often to break down. Access to shower facilities was excellent but we were generally disappointed at the standard of decor, tidiness and cleanliness in the Block. We were also surprised at the comparatively spartan and drab appearance of communal areas on the ground floor.

Comment

6.40 The closure of Bravo Block in order to make way for the male YOs, had resulted in overcrowding in Yankee which meant that prisoners on observation were once again being doubled up and not permitted access to night sanitation, a situation which we found to be highly undesirable. We have therefore suggested that the policy in respect of night sanitation is re-examined with a view to maximising access to toilet facilities during the night - notwithstanding the difficulties which will have to be overcome in order to do so (see paragraph 6.19.5). We considered recreation opportunities for all convicted prisoners to be somewhat unimaginative and worth revitalising.

6.41 We consider that staff in Yankee have a particularly demanding task and that because of the pressures described above, they were stretched to the limit. We therefore suggest that out of Block commitments for Yankee staff should be reviewed; if the separate cells are no longer used for observation prisoners (see paragraph 5.8), this would release staff time to

concentrate more on individual prisoners and on the development of the regime (especially that for the LTPs). Staff would also benefit from a programme of relevant training which would serve to complement their invariable commitment and enthusiasm and enable them fully to identify and meet the needs of the Yankee population.

6.42 Regular multi-disciplinary case meetings should also be undertaken in the Block to facilitate discussion of difficult management problems. This forum could also be used to share information, strengthen mutual support and discuss complex issues with specialist colleagues. We suggest also that the immediate post admission induction into Yankee should be reviewed with a view to enabling staff to spend more time with each individual. We also see merit in the production of a pamphlet containing information specific to Yankee which could be given to every prisoner to help with their orientation.

Papa Block

6.43 When we visited, Papa Block held both YO and adult convicted prisoners but only of security categories C and D. The Block did not accommodate prisoners on any form of observation and ideally only took those on progression from Yankee who were conforming, had adopted a positive attitude and response and who had a good work record. Unfortunately, however, the pressure for spaces in Yankee resulting from Bravo's closure, had meant that some of the prisoners transferring to Papa fell far short of the standards of attitude and response which would normally have been expected. The Block comprised 55 cells in 8 Units and was accommodating 52 at the time of our visit.

6.44 The staff complement for the Block was a Shift Supervisor and 4 Officers all of whom were designated as Personal Officers but most of whom had received no training in the role. No prisoner case management meetings took place and not all staff were involved in the sentence planning scheme. In terms of communications, the staff held a monthly 'rankless' meeting which had an entirely open agenda.

6.45 Papa operated an internal progression system and admissions were located in Units 5 and 6 which, depending on numbers, could be doubled up as necessary. Induction to the

Block comprised a 15-20 minute interview with an Officer, access to the universal prisoners' information pack and advice to check notice boards for current information. No pamphlet containing information specific to Papa Block was available.

6.46 Of the population of 52, 45 had jobs outside the Block and of the remainder, all but those who were unfit for work, were Unit cleaners. Work for the bulk of Papa prisoners took place between 0800 - 1215 and 1330 -1615 hours. Prisoners could also attend education classes, PE and cognitive skills training. Unfortunately, however, attendance at these activities was at the cost of interruptions to the working day which caused disruption to work parties and frustration for staff. Nevertheless, we understand that planning is in hand to introduce regime timetabling at Cornton Vale, which will help considerably in organising attendance at regime activities in a systematic and efficient way. We welcome this initiative.

6.47 Access time to structured activities - which are defined in SPS Operating Standards (36.1) as work, education, vocational training, PE, discussion groups and counselling sessions amounted - to about 7 hours per day which falls short of the recommended minimum of 8 hours. Out of cell time on the other hand was very generous and over the 12 hours recommended in the Standards. Out of cell time at the weekend dropped to 8 hours when there was no weekend recreation because of staff shortages.

6.48 The progression system in Papa was defined by the range of privileges available at each level. Level one was admission Units 5 and 6 from which some short term prisoners were unlikely to have sufficient time to move on. The prisoners here had no access to television after lock up at night, though they had free movement within their section. They had to return their cutlery to staff at the end of each meal and had no 'lie in' at weekends. They did, however, in common with all prisoners in Papa, have a key to their own room.

6.49 Units 7 and 8 at the second level, were used to house category C prisoners serving short to mid-length sentences with Unit 3 theoretically housing long term category Cs - the range of privileges was however, the same for each group. These prisoners were differentiated from the admission group by having communal access to television at night and where they met the criteria, being included in the Chapel visits scheme.

6.50 Units 4, 2 and 1 represented the top end of the internal progression system and theoretically housed short, mid and long term category 'D' prisoners respectively. This group had access to their kitchens and sitting rooms 24 hours per day and had an internal telephone link to staff. The external door to their Unit was left unlocked during the day which meant that they could move unescorted around the establishment, only informing staff of leaving and returning to the Block. They were permitted to retain cutlery and razors at all times. Category D prisoners also had the privilege of weekly swimming at Polmont YOI. In general terms, there were also small differences between each stage in relation to the number and type of items of jewellery, personal possessions and clothing which were allowed.

6.51 Recreation throughout the Block centred on the television and each Unit was provided with a TV and video. Access to recreation time during the week was generous but had frequently been unavailable on weekend evenings because of staff shortages. Cell hobbies were currently confined to knitting and crochet.

6.52 There was one cardphone for the Block, located at Unit 5, and a booking system was in operation particularly for the cheaper evening and weekend calls. The phone was, however, switched on all day. Visits entitlement was as described at paragraph 6.121.

6.53 Meal times were as elsewhere in the prison but were most disappointed to note that the Homemaker scheme had been abolished; as in Yankee, the women complained strongly to us about no longer being able to cook their own meals (see also paragraphs 10.7 and 7.14-17).

6.54 We were satisfied with the arrangements for women to change and wash their clothing and with the frequency of changes to bedlinen and towels. There was, however, only one tumble drier for all 52 women and only the category Ds had access to it.

Comment

6.55 Given that Cornton Vale is the only establishment in Scotland for female LTPs, the principle of having some form of progression system is desirable. We were, however, of the

view that the differences between the first and second stages in the progression system were negligible and therefore worth revisiting in order to provide realistic incentives to progress.

6.56 Overall, we found that the regime for women in Papa whilst relaxed, was very limited in scope and totally lacking in a range of basic opportunities to help prepare the prisoners for release. There was, for example, no pre-release programme and no involvement by appropriate agencies such as APEX who provide employment advice and training.

6.57 Sentence planning also required significant improvement (see also paragraphs 6.71-75) and apart from a recently begun cognitive skills programme, there were no other offending behaviour programmes provided (see also paragraph 6.78). We were also greatly disappointed that the autonomy and training provided to LTPs through making their own meals had been stopped.

6.58 Before the required improvement can be made to the regime for convicted women in Cornton Vale, the range of work, vocational training, education and offending behaviour programmes currently provided, will require significant improvement.

Female Open Unit (Heathervale House)

6.59 Heathervale opened on 9 March 1996 to provide open prison conditions for security category D female prisoners and for those whose preparation for parole includes the need for a period of TFF. The facility is situated outside the perimeter fence of HMYOI Polmont and had previously been used as a TFF facility for male YOs. It had been comprehensively refurbished for its change of use and the accommodation was of a very high standard. The accommodation comprised rooms for a maximum of 16 women with 2 sitting rooms, staff office, kitchen, utility room and the usual facilities. Decoration, furnishings and soft furnishings were of a good standard. The total staff complement was 2 full time Officers and 4 relief Officers working early and late shifts - though there were plans to review the staff attendance pattern in the summer. At the time of our inspection, there were 6 prisoners in the Unit and one application in the pipeline.

6.60 Although the Unit was the responsibility of the Governor of Cornton Vale, incident and emergency cover, routine services and estates maintenance were provided by the Governor of Polmont. In the short time that it had been in operation, the latter had not encountered any operational difficulties. He did, however, express concern about the fact that some women in the Unit were receiving significant amounts of medication. However, he was still in process of trying to establish a contract with Cornton Vale to clarify the full extent of his responsibilities and hopefully this matter can be resolved as soon as possible.

6.61 The criteria for consideration of a place in the Unit was that the prisoner must be serving 18 months or over, have served one third or 6 months of that sentence whichever was longer, have held a security category D for a minimum of 6 weeks, have had one successful home leave, exemplary conduct for the preceding 6 months (ie no loss of association or days added on to sentence) and a negative drug test. Appellants, sexual offenders and fire raisers were not eligible for a place. It was expected that the length of stay in the Unit would be a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 2 years.

6.62 Induction into the Unit comprised a 4 day programme which was both comprehensive and thorough. There was, however, no provision for systematic pre release preparation or for involving outside agencies where appropriate - eg APEX - in helping prisoners with employment or with housing, relationships, finances and so on. There was no formal process for adopting an holistic approach to the individual's needs at the end of her sentence and ensuring that all reasonable steps had been taken to address outstanding issues and therefore to maximise her chance of remaining crime free on release. There was no throughcare planning.

6.63 Of the 15 women who had passed through the Unit between March and our inspection in May, 6 had been returned to Cornton Vale as unsuitable - ie 2 with positive drug tests (these were undertaken randomly or on suspicion in the Unit), 2 on discipline reports and 2 with unsuitable attitudes. Of the 6 then in residence, one was employed as a full-time Unit domestic and undertook all the catering and cleaning of communal areas, one was a catering assistant in an old people's home, one was taking a course at a local college and 3 were employed as domestic/general assistants also in old people's homes.

6.64 The women left the Unit daily Monday-Friday at 0800 and returned by 1700. Their weekly remuneration comprised £12 earnings, £1 for hairdressing and £4 for compulsory savings. Families or friends were also permitted to supply the women with £4 private cash each week. In terms of unescorted absences from the Unit, the women were allowed one 48 hour home leave every 4 weeks and one 8 hour local parole (within a 5 mile radius) with family or an approved visitor. They were also eligible for 5 days home leave at Christmas and in the summer and those on TFF were also entitled to additional absences connected with their preparation for parole. Local leave under staff escort was available on Wednesday evenings and at weekends, staff permitting.

6.65 The routine within the Unit outwith working hours Monday-Friday also included opportunities for escorted shopping, swimming and library visits. We were, however, puzzled to discover that on transfer to the Unit from Cornton Vale, access to educational support was withdrawn. There were 'house' meetings 3 times per week to discuss domestic and group issues. No visitors were allowed into the Unit.

Comment

6.66 Heathervale was in the early stages of its operation at the time of our inspection. Nevertheless, it was disappointing to learn that 40% of the Unit's population had been returned to closed conditions within the first 2 months of opening. We therefore suggest that the selection process for Heathervale should be reviewed to ensure that it is more rigorous.

6.67 The Unit was well appointed, relaxed and offered a very good opportunity for women to make the gradual transition between custody and community. That process would, however, be significantly enhanced by the introduction of a pre-release programme which we consider to be an essential element of pre-release preparation. An individual throughcare plan should also be prepared for, and with, each woman in order to ensure that ongoing intervention and support are arranged as appropriate, in terms of a range of possible needs such as medical care, addiction counselling, family relationships, parenting, employment, education and so on. In regard to the latter, Cornton Vale should continue to provide

educational input into Heathervale as required. In our view, the policy of not allowing families into the Unit should also be reviewed at least in respect of access by children to their mothers, as gradual reintroduction of mother and child in a relaxed setting is extremely important to both.

6.68 We noted that only the full-time Officers in Heathervale had received basic training for their role and we suggest that the relief staff should also be trained to a similar level. We also believe that groupwork and counselling skills training should be a prerequisite for this kind of role.

6.69 Discussion with the employers of 2 of the placements reflected their desire for more written information about how employment fits into pre-release preparation, what 'open conditions' meant and more in general terms about the function of Heathervale. They rather felt that they were operating in a comparative vacuum, concentrating only on the employment aspect of the prisoner's programme. We agree and suggest that a detailed information pamphlet should be prepared for employers to complement the verbal briefing delivered by Heathervale staff. We also urge that efforts be made to expand the range of work opportunities for the women beyond the very traditional and limiting roles of domestic and cook.

6.70 Potentially, we felt that Heathervale had much to offer in terms of pre release preparation for women. However, the Unit's regime will require significant improvement before prisoners will be able to derive maximum benefit from the experience.

Sentence Planning

6.71 Historically, sentence planning had been undertaken by 2 Officers deployed on a day shift basis. With the advent of the Induction Unit, however, the activity was subsumed into the induction process - ie the provision of general information about the scheme and the raising of appropriate forms. Thereafter, the prisoner and the embryonic sentence plan were transferred to the care of a designated Personal Officer. The scheme was thus being gradually decentralised.

6.72 In practice though, we found some difficulty in gaining access to sentence planning records as a number of staff to whom we spoke had no idea how the scheme was operating in their area or who was responsible for its control. The records which we inspected at random were invariably out of date with one of the sample records showing no input since August 1994 and another, none since August 1995. We also found that individual targets lacked rigour and focus and that overall, the plans were not a helpful complement to prisoner management or preparation for ultimate release. Some prisoners complained that they had little contact with the Officers who completed reports on them.

6.73 As for the relatively newly appointed Personal Officers whose responsibilities included sentence planning, there had been no basic training for most of them in either the role of the Personal Officer or in the sentence planning scheme, for at least 14 months. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that the scheme lacked impact and effectiveness.

6.74 It was also significant to the credibility of the sentence planning scheme amongst both staff and prisoners, that because there were so few regime opportunities available, serious choice was severely limited. For example, until February 1996, there had been no offending behaviour programmes in place, work opportunities within the prison were amongst the poorest we have seen and educational provision lacked effective focus and depth.

Comment

6.75 Sentence planning at Cornton Vale requires a thorough and radical review. Personal Officers require to be trained first in their own role and then in relation to sentence planning. The scheme needs to be reinvigorated, made meaningful and used as an essential tool in prisoner management. In tandem, the range of quality regime opportunities must be improved before the establishment can hope to begin to meet agreed needs.

Offending Behaviour Programmes

6.76 We were alarmed to find that apart from the cognitive skills programme (which had only begun in February 1996), there were no programmes in place to enable prisoners to address their offending behaviour. In addition, there was no formal pre-release programme (including systematic throughcare planning) for those women to be released direct from Cornton Vale and there was no provision to meet the special needs of Life sentence prisoners. The absence of basic programmes was of particular concern to us given the multiple personal, social, behavioural, addiction and offending problems presented by the population. The situation was further exacerbated by the comparatively poor work opportunities available to the prisoners and by the absence of any psychology input for the best part of 12 months.

6.77 On the positive side, shortly before our inspection began, an Addiction Support Unit and an Induction and Assessment Unit had opened in Sierra Block. The former clearly had a specialised function in relation to substance abuse and was therefore limited in scope, but the latter was at least a starting point and it should seek to ensure that a careful analysis of prisoners needs is one of its main priorities.

Comment

6.78 We raised the matter of a lack of relevant programmes for the prisoners at our last inspection in May 1995 and are disturbed to find that very little tangible progress has been made in the interim to establish even basic provision. The present situation is thoroughly unsatisfactory and requires urgent attention by the Governor and his senior management team.

Cognitive Skills

6.79 Cognitive skills training began in Cornton Vale in February 1996 and at the time of our inspection, the second course was in train. The programme is modular and takes 72 hours over 7 weeks to deliver. The programme leader, who was also a Discipline Officer in Yankee, undertook the cognitive skills training role on a part-time basis and held one or

two 2 hour sessions on 4 days each week with her fifth day being spent on normal duties in the Block.

6.80 The trainer was clearly enthusiastic about the potential of the programme and committed to its effective implementation. However, there was a number of significant problems connected with its delivery.

6.81 The primary problem was that the programme was being run as a separate entity unrelated to sentence planning and not integrated into the prison's overall regime. Despite her best efforts, therefore, the trainer had considerable difficulty in first identifying appropriate potential participants for the programme, and then in overcoming their reluctance to participate for fear of losing a job which may have taken some time and effort to obtain, losing wages, or simply not being free to join the programme because of education or other commitments.

6.82 The first 2 courses which had been held did not therefore wholly comprise those women most in need of cognitive skills training. Rather, they contained a combination of appropriate participants and others who were at best borderline in terms of their suitability, which had presented considerable difficulties to the trainer in terms of group dynamics. Not surprisingly, this situation contributed to the loss of one participant out of 7 on the first course and 3 out of 9 on the second.

6.83 In relation to the role of the trainer, we were once again (as with our recent inspection of Glenochil) concerned at the lack of direct supervision and easily accessible support for the postholder - especially for an individual very new to the role. Undertaking the delivery of this programme alone is a heavy burden because it is intensive, demanding and technical. Ideally, the programme should therefore be delivered by 2 people to ensure mutual support and to share the intensive teaching role with a group who will inevitably have multiple personal, social and sometimes behavioural problems. A recently introduced SPIN forum for cognitive skills trainers is a helpful innovation, but difficulty in accessing a terminal with sufficient frequency and for long enough to read and reply to messages, was a problem for the Cornton Vale trainer.

Comment

6.84 Given the potentially positive influence which cognitive skills training can have on some offenders, it is most important that every effort should be made at local level to maximise that potential. A number of steps require to be taken to ensure that the programme has the best possible chance of succeeding:-

6.84.1 Personal Officers who are responsible for prisoners subject to the sentence planning scheme, should routinely determine whether any individual might benefit from cognitive skills training and liaise with the trainer accordingly. All staff should be proactive in identifying prisoners whose background and needs suggest that they may be candidates for the programme. Personal Officers should work with the trainer to ensure that only the most appropriate prisoners attend.

6.84.2 Consideration should be given by management to making the trainer role full time in order that the programme can be properly developed. Ideally, the course should be delivered by 2 staff but if that is not considered viable, then a relief trainer should be provided. This second Officer would also help to ameliorate some of the problems caused by the stress and isolation inherent in delivering the programme alone.

6.84.3 The trainer's programme delivery should be the subject of reasonably regular monitoring by a person trained in cognitive skills to ensure consistent standards. Such supervision would not only ensure that any weaknesses were identified and corrected, but would help to reassure trainers about their ability to delivery the training appropriately.

6.84.4 The prison's regime should integrate cognitive skills training to avoid timetabling problems which operate to the detriment of prisoners, and arrangements should be made to ensure that prisoners do not lose out financially or in any other way by seeking to address their offending behaviour by participating in this programme.

6.84.5 The annual staff reporting arrangements for the trainer must take account of her unusual position - ie as programme co-ordinator and deliverer and as Discipline Officer. The reporting officer(s) must therefore be in a position to see her work on a regular basis and fully to understand the essentials of the cognitive skills programme. The provision of a comprehensive job description for this dual role should therefore be addressed as quickly as possible. Management should also decide and make clear whether this post will continue as it is at present and if so, for how long and to deliver what number of courses per year.

6.85 Cognitive skills training is clearly in its very earliest stages at Cornton Vale and its implementation will inevitably suffer some teething problems. That said, it is nevertheless essential that the trainer should be given every practical and knowledgeable support possible to ensure that her efforts are meaningful and not purely cosmetic.

Addiction Support Unit

6.86 The ASU, which was located in Sierra Block, opened in March 1996 with the original intention that it should operate as a detoxification unit for prisoners undergoing drug withdrawal. However, because the prisons MOs had not yet developed a standardised local policy and protocols for a drug reduction programme, the Unit had become focused instead on addiction support. The staff complement was 3 Officers on early and 3 on late shift.

6.87 The Unit had accommodation for 14 prisoners, though groups tended to be between 8 and 10 in size. The programme was based on a combination of programmes offered at other prisons with each course lasting 3½ weeks. Courses were run by Discipline Officers, but training and experience for their role was variable. The team had the support of the prison's part-time addictions worker who met with them fortnightly to discuss issues of concern or difficulty - though she did not supervise any sessions or provide an evaluation of individual coaching and counselling skills.

6.88 At the time of our inspection, prisoners completing the programme were housed wherever there was available space in their parent Block. This made attempts at abstinence from drugs very difficult for those who were trying to give up the habit. We understand, however, that consideration is now being given to identifying drug free areas, an initiative which we fully support - see paragraph 4.18.3.

Comment

6.89 We were once again impressed by the clear commitment of the staff in the ASU to discharge their role with enthusiasm and professionalism. Their efforts deserve to be supported by a commitment to ensure as far as practicable, that their programme and regime will not continue to be interrupted either by an obligation to undertake regular observation of disturbed and difficult prisoners located in Sierra's separate cells because of overcrowding elsewhere, or by their staffing levels being reduced as a result of staff shortages in other areas. The ASU's programme also needs to be subject to ongoing evaluation to determine whether it meets its stated aims.

6.90 As stated earlier - see paragraph 4.18.1 - training for staff in the ASU should be both systematic and consistent with the demands of the programme and the needs of the participants. The team also require to develop a set of protocols to define an agreed response to issues which arise during the programme and with which they are not trained to deal - eg sexual and physical abuse. It would also be helpful to the team as they develop their skills, to have experienced coaching support and advice.

6.91 The ASU has the potential to provide a much needed service to the prisoners. It must, however, proceed on a sound footing and therefore its aims and objectives must be clear, staff should be properly equipped to feel and be confident in delivering the programme and as with all other elements of the regime, it should be fully integrated. There is otherwise a danger that this programme will quickly become ineffective.

Work and Vocational Training

6.92 The Labour Allocation Board met twice weekly. In addition to seeing prisoners as part of the induction process, the Board's main functions were those of dealing with both vacancies in work parties and requests for changes of work party. Key jobs were advertised on notice boards in various locations throughout the establishment and the per capita rate for the Institution was £6.60.

6.93 At the time of our inspection, work available in the Institution included the following:

6.93.1 An assessment party supervised by one Officer. Between 6 and 10 prisoners were employed making various soft toys and textile articles for charities - including the prison service charity shop in York. As part of an internal review of industries, it was proposed to upgrade this party to vocational training (VT) in soft furnishings.

6.93.2 The main textile party was supervised by 2 staff and employed approximately 14 prisoners making pyjama jackets. Contracts for other articles, including uniform skirts were well advanced. Training was available to SCOTVEC standard in 'Introduction into Machine Skills'.

6.93.3 The grounds party, which was supervised by 2 staff, could employ up to 12 prisoners (fewer during the winter). Approximately 20 acres of land were being worked, which included lawns adjacent to the accommodation Blocks, a field and various areas of shrubbery. Some 1,120 sq ft of polythene tunnels were in use in the gardens where there was also 2,000 square feet under glass. Although no formal training was provided, prisoners gained experience in greenhouse work, raising bedding plants and growing vegetables.

6.93.4 The VT hairdressing party was supervised by one Officer with up to 8 prisoners who were normally serving sentences of 18 months or over. Opportunities existed for those with longer sentences to be trained up to HNC and to SCOTVEC

level 4. Hairdressing services were provided to other prisoners and staff and to senior citizens from the local community who also visited the salon twice a week.

6.94 Domestic and cleaning work was also undertaken throughout the prison and there were jobs for prisoners in the laundry and kitchen. At the time of inspection, a former textile workshed was being partitioned to accommodate a VT industrial cleaning course and a meeting area for group work.

Comment

6.95 We were impressed with the enthusiasm shown by the various members of the Industrial staff and we were satisfied that some of the work provided was useful preparation for release. That said, the number of work places fell far short of the number of prisoners who were available and willing to work. The employment opportunities were in fact amongst the worst we had seen and were in need of urgent modernisation and progressive thinking.

6.96 We welcome the fact that Management is planning to introduce a regime timetable approach in which there will be 12 work sessions and 8 sessions of education, PE and offending behaviour programmes per week. This will go some way towards providing a more useful and structured day for prisoners but before the timetable can be viable, there needs to be a root and branch revitalisation of both the work opportunities and the programmes available. We therefore **recommend** that it receives as high a priority as possible in the Review of Industries which is being conducted by the SPS.

Education

6.97 Stoke on Trent College of Education had won the contract to provide education services to Cornton Vale in April 1995, although there had been an initial hiatus of some 3 months with no education taking place, before classes were finally sorted out.

6.98 The current complement of teachers was one full time co-ordinator plus 5 part timers, each providing between 1½ hours and 2 days of teaching input per week depending on need. The education unit operated for 50 weeks of the year subdivided into quarters. There was no provision or planning for evening classes. SCOTVEC certification was available but no statistics could be provided on the number of prisoners undergoing certification and in which subjects, nor of the numbers who had gained certificates. Also, there was no formal link between VT and education - a relationship which clearly requires to be developed. Subjects presently offered included creative writing, communication, craft cookery, pastry, guitar, English, maths, computer and computer art, art, numeracy, modern history, sociology and job seeking skills.

6.99 It was worrying to find that there was no formal integrated *multi-disciplinary* approach within the prison to the induction, assessment and case management of prisoners. The absence of such a systematic approach to assessment and prisoner management meant that education services were largely provided as an adjunct to the regime and did not focus on clearly identified needs. Additionally, the fact that the curriculum was based on what the teachers were competent to teach and on those subjects which were popular, rather than on comprehensive needs analysis, also militated against the education unit being able to provide a service which had any real prospect of meeting prisoners' needs.

6.100 Prisoners were in fact selected for education classes on the basis of responding to advertisements, being interviewed and then being placed in class or on a waiting list depending on availability. At the time of our inspection there were some 45 convicted women attending a class of some kind with 15 on the waiting list but given the size of the total population, we considered this take up to be too low. Classes were also available on 2 afternoons per week for Remand prisoners but attendance was very patchy with anything between zero and 6 prisoners attending for maths and English and around 6 or 7 for cookery. Provision was also made where appropriate, for prisoners on observation status to have access to education.

6.101 There was no systematic link between the sentence planning process and educational provision and there was no individual assessment of educational attainment, both of which we

felt were particularly serious deficits in terms of meeting basic needs. We also considered that the situation was unlikely to improve significantly until the education manager was fully involved in the induction and assessment process, in sentence planning, strategic planning and had an active role in prisoner case management. We also considered that the education manager should have regular access to a senior management forum in which she would be able to contribute productively to a multi-disciplinary approach to regime planning and provision. Whilst contact with her line manager was described as good, we thought that this was no substitute for more personal involvement in regime development.

6.102 In terms of the operation of the education unit, we noted with some concern, that there was no reliable system for ensuring that prisoners regularly attended the classes for which they had enrolled. There was a number of reasons offered for this, including a lack of commitment by staff to ensure that prisoners in their Block were called for their classes and escorted timeously to the education unit; prisoners were routinely withdrawn ad hoc from classes for attendance at the hairdresser, for work, Health Centre etc; and at other times, prisoners simply did not arrive for class and no contact was routinely made on either side to determine the reason. The result of these absences and interruptions was that classes frequently ran with very small numbers of prisoners - ie 2 or 3 instead of 8-10 - and there was no system for tracking the whereabouts of prisoners. On the grounds of effective and efficient use of education contract time and of ensuring basic security in terms of prisoner movement and location, the present situation is wholly unsatisfactory. The matter of attendance at classes therefore requires urgent review with a commitment to ensure that prisoners attend classes, are fully accounted for and that interruptions to classes to withdraw prisoners are kept to an absolute minimum. However, until steps are taken to review the current total regime with a view to integrating its presently disparate elements, then real and lasting improvement to the present weaknesses are the more difficult.

6.103 With the impending arrival of the male YOs, it had been decided to double up the art room as a classroom for this group with a second classroom being converted into a visits room for them boys - see also paragraph 4.39. This has reduced flexibility in the use of accommodation for providing education classes to the female prisoners and is already proving

unsatisfactory. Some 15 hours of education in total per week will be provided to groups of 8-10 boys which will require additional teaching time to be built into the contract.

Comment

6.104 We felt that the way in which education services were currently configured was not the most effective in terms of meeting the needs of Cornton Vale's population. There had been no individual or general needs analysis of the population and for example, no individual tuition was routinely offered to illiterate and semi-literate prisoners, on the basis that intensive one to one tuition would not be cost effective in terms of contract hours. This particular situation was of serious concern to us given the fundamental importance of basic literacy.

6.105 Stoke on Trent College has the contract to provide education services for another 2 prisons in the central belt and their full time co-ordinator and adviser is based in Glenochil. We suggest therefore that a working group, including at least the Resources and Services manager, the Stoke on Trent adviser and the education manager, should review the current provision and operation of the education unit with a view to maximising prisoner participation and offering classes which are relevant and consistent with their measured needs, particularly in relation to the needs of illiterate and semi-literate prisoners. If the present education contract is not able to address this deficit then it should be radically reviewed. In the interim, consideration should be given to the involvement of volunteer adult literacy tutors. Once again (as with Glenochil) we were also concerned to note the absence of robust performance measures in the contract and no independent procedure for the inspection of the quality of teaching and standard of service delivery.

6.106 The education manager should routinely be involved in assessing prisoners educationally (especially LTPs) and in ongoing prisoner management - including that for difficult and disturbed women. She should be an integral part of a senior management regime planning and development forum and of the sentence planning process - all of which would better inform her of the education needs of the population for which she was delivering

educational services. In order to help the manager in her administration of the education service, it would be helpful for her to be provided with a SPIN terminal.

Library

6.107 The prison library contained some 4,000 books which were supplied by Stirling District Library who also undertook a training role in respect of the prisoner librarian. Fifty per cent of the books were changed annually. There was also a supply of magazines and some story tapes but there was no video or music section. We understand that there are plans to introduce a music library by July of 1996, but we suggest that serious consideration should also be given to providing a talking books section for those prisoners with literacy problems.

6.108 The library was located in an area which had previously been used as a classroom and was therefore limited in size. It was, however, open throughout the day Monday-Friday for convicted women when the prisoner librarian was available, and on Wednesday and Friday evenings for those on Remand. The library did not supply books or any other material to the accommodation Blocks and we were struck by the dearth of reading material of any kind in the communal areas there. We therefore suggest that the library function should extend its sphere of operation into the accommodation areas and provide a readily accessible stock of paperbacks and magazines. We believe this initiative would work well with donated material and has a reasonable prospect of success given the reportedly low levels of defacement and destruction of books.

Comment

6.109 We considered that the library stock would benefit from a boost and that efforts should be made to try to ensure that the titles available were likely to be of continuing interest to the population. Additional stock could be obtained through book, magazine and tape donation if funds were not available to purchase or obtain additional material because of the limitations of per capita library costs. We also suggest that the library should be open at weekends for those prisoners who are unable to attend during the day because of work and other commitments or because staff are not available to escort them to the facility. The

library would also benefit from a little reorganisation to make it more welcoming and user friendly.

Physical Education

6.110 The PE staffing complement was 3 Physical Education Instructors (PEIs), though at the time of our inspection only 2 were in post; a third PEI had been selected to fill the vacancy and would be starting in July. The 2 members of staff worked on a main (0800-1700 hours) and modified late (1200-2030 hours) shift basis though because of rest days and other reasons, on at least 2 days per week only one was on duty and then an 0800-2030 hour day was worked. One PEI was on duty on Saturdays (0800-1500 hours) and one on Sundays (0900-1600 hours). When the third PEI arrived, revised attendance patterns would come into operation with the aim of maintaining the midweek opening hours of 0800-2030.

6.111 A timetabled programme had been made up which ensured that each category of prisoner in the Institution was at least offered the opportunity to participate in some form of activity most days. For YOs, their daily midweek sessions were compulsory. In the evenings, aerobic step and other workout programmes were available for convicted prisoners - adults and YOs - and on one evening per week up to ten security category D prisoners were taken swimming at HMYOI Polmont. Staff access to the gymnasium facilities was generous and they were well used.

6.112 The gymnasium was of a reasonable size for the activities which currently took place there and some new weights and fitness equipment had recently been purchased; this was located on the stage (the gym also doubled as a concert hall). The female changing room had recently been refurbished to an acceptable standard but the male changing facility, which was used by staff and by the occasional visiting prisoners from other establishments for volleyball matches, was scruffy and in need of upgrading.

6.113 PE kits were available but the majority of prisoners opted to wear their own clothing. Similarly, training shoes were available for those who did not have their own but we noted

that they were not being sprayed prior to re-issue and this is something which requires to be addressed.

6.114 Attendance at classes was disappointing. Out of a population of over 100 convicted adults, the average attendance at classes was only about 10-15 which is perhaps a reflection of a combination of the age of many of the prisoners and a general disinterest in physical activities. It was suggested to us by PE staff that there was some reluctance on the part of staff to release prisoners from their work parties to attend PE.

6.115 As noted above, specific sessions had been set aside to enable staff to use the gymnasium facilities. However, we were told that there were proposals to move to a single staff break at which time the PE staff would be used to cover certain posts. As a consequence, any gymnasium activities would be unsupervised which would increase the risk of injury and there was concern that some staff might stop using the facility.

6.116 PE staff had drawn up a revised timetable in anticipation of the arrival of the male YOs. Unlike the programme for the female prisoners, which tended to be unstructured and allowed them to participate in whatever activity the majority favoured, the male YO programme would have set activities at set times. There was concern, however, that the gymnasium was unsuitable for indoor football, which was a favourite activity for male YOs, and therefore some other activities would have to be considered. An outdoor football field was being prepared but we were told that it was very rutted and therefore not ideal. It was pointed out also that it was inevitable that female sessions would have to be cut back in order to accommodate the males.

6.117 As regards their budget, the PEIs had control over a sum of £2k for minor items and cleaning materials. Larger items were paid out of a £7k budget but that was controlled by management and it was claimed that PE staff had little input into how that money was being spent or, indeed, even if it had been spent.

Comment

6.118 Cornton Vale has good gymnasium facilities though we suggest that the changing area used by male staff should be upgraded to bring it up to par with the female facility. There were sufficient opportunities for prisoners to attend the gym and they were very much free to choose the activity in which they would wish to participate. There is no doubt, however, that their access to the facilities will be significantly curtailed with the arrival of the male YOs though it is to be hoped that better and more efficient use will be made of the gymnasium facilities with the introduction of regime timetabling. This should also overcome the difficulty in prisoners accessing the gym because they could not be released from work.

Visits

6.119 Visit facilities comprised:-

6.119.1 One main open visit room above the Gate containing 13 low tables with chairs, a small play area for children, vending machines to dispense snacks and drinks and a serving hatch from which the WRVS supplied refreshments at weekends. This area was also used for social work and solicitors' visits. A toilet off the visit room contained baby changing facilities. All normal visits were supervised by 5 Officers with the aid of CCTV cameras, though prisoners found this level of observation to be oppressive.

6.119.2 Three closed visit cubicles were on the ground floor for use by prisoners or visitors who had abused the privilege of open visits. These cubicles precluded physical contact between prisoners and their visitors, and were constantly supervised by one member of staff.

6.119.3 The prison's Chapel was used as the location for bonding visits between mothers and small children.

6.119.4 The Social Work Unit hosted visits in which children were brought under external social work supervision to see their mother.

6.120 The visitors' waiting area adjacent to the main gate was cramped and lacked baby changing facilities. There was no supply of information leaflets there for visitors, nor was there ready access to staff by way of an information point for any advice and guidance which visitors might seek.

6.121 In terms of visit provision, we were generally satisfied with the frequency and duration of visits for Remand prisoners at one hour (maximum) per day, Monday-Friday. The provision for convicted women was considerably less satisfactory however, at between one and 2 hours (depending on demand in the visit room) fortnightly at weekends only. The availability of bonding visits for mothers and their children in the relaxed atmosphere of the prison chaplaincy centre is a good initiative but access to the privilege was not universal. Special family visits were also available at weekends for convicted women housed in Papa Block.

6.122 Prisoners were randomly strip searched in the Reception area after their visits. We noted that there were only 4 lockers for use by visitors to store personal items before going into open visits areas within the prison. As this provision did not meet the need, visitors were regularly taking bags into the visits areas, which represented a considerable security risk. We have, therefore, written to SPS HQ suggesting that the number of such lockers should be increased.

Comment

6.123 The main criticism regarding visits raised by the Inspectorate during the short inspection of Cornton Vale in May 1995 had not been addressed. This was essentially that standard minimum visits provision for convicted women should be increased and that Remand prisoners should be able to have visits at weekends as well as during the week. Both of these recommendations are now contained in principle in the SPS's Operating Standards. At that last inspection, assurances were given that a review of visits arrangements

was underway and that the prison's strategic plan recognised a range of problems associated with visits provision. Notwithstanding that recognition and review, some 12 months later, little or no progress had been made in improving standard visits provision. We would hope therefore to see the early implementation of the visits review.

6.124 Cornton Vale offers a range of visits provision for its population and we were particularly impressed with the bonding and family visits initiatives both of which we fully support. The importance of family contact for prisoners generally, but particularly for women and their children should not be underestimated. It is therefore essential that management should seek to maximise opportunities for quality family contact between the prisoners and their families within appropriate boundaries. As visit arrangements stand at Cornton Vale, there is scope for considerable improvement in terms of both quality and quantity of standard provision and there is a need to examine the potential for much wider access by all prisoners to bonding and family visits especially where these would represent a demonstrable and positive benefit to both the prisoner and her family - but to her children in particular.

Prisoners' Visitors

6.125 As is our practice, we extended an invitation to meet prisoners' visitors to discuss any aspects of the visit arrangements. As a result of that invitation we met formally with one group; in addition, we spoke to a number of visitors on an informal basis.

6.126 Visitors' views on staff attitudes were mixed. Some found staff to be helpful and polite but we were also told that some were not prepared to be flexible when dealing with visitors who arrived late after travelling long distances and that some were very quick to terminate a visit on the merest hint of suspicion. We also received complaints that the hot drinks vending machine in the visits room rarely worked and that the snack food machine also broke down on a fairly regular basis. Finally, the general view was that visitors were not happy with the introduction of the new small tables in the visits area which they found uncomfortable to sit at.

Family Contact Development Officer (FCDO)

6.127 The FCDO coordinator role formed part of a Discipline Officer's duties and there was a designated deputy. Each accommodation Block also had one Officer who undertook a range of visits liaison duties akin to those of the FCDO. Neither the FCDO coordinator nor her deputy had a job description and the coordinator had received no training (the deputy had been a full-time FCDO at Shotts). The FCDO did, however, attend meetings under the umbrella of the Scottish Forum on Prisons and Families which provided an opportunity for FCDOs from across the Service to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

6.128 The role of the Block visits liaison officers was to deal with general visits issues, to act as a designated link person, to liaise directly with families and to see visitors as required. This is a welcome initiative, but in order for those undertaking the role, and for others to be clear about their duties, they should be provided with a description of their duties and responsibilities, appropriate training to undertake the job effectively and sufficient time set aside within their normal duties to see visitors, sort out problems and so on. There is excellent training material and readily available support and guidance on the role and responsibilities of the FCDO provided by the coordinator of the Scottish Forum and we commend his services to all establishments who are seeking to develop this important role more fully.

6.129 In terms of information for visitors, a small pamphlet covering basic details had been produced, though at the time we inspected the visits area, there were no copies available for visitors. The pamphlet itself would have benefited from the inclusion of some general details about the establishment itself, advice for visitors on how and whom to contact with queries or concerns about a prisoner and positive advice about what visitors *are* allowed to do and supply, not just what is forbidden. (We commend the HMP Shotts visitors' information booklet as a good example of best practice.)

6.130 We were pleased to find that the FCDO had surveyed visitors about their visits experience and that although the response had been disappointing, there were plans to review the survey process and repeat the exercise - the point being to improve visit arrangements as

much as was practicable. Plans were in hand to provide a video loop in the visitors' waiting area giving general information about the prison and about visits. Toilet facilities in the waiting area were to be upgraded (baby changing facilities ought to be included in the upgrade), the main visits area was to be redecorated and the small children's play area was to be improved.

Comment

6.131 There is considerable scope at Cornton Vale for the development of a very useful and effective contribution by the FCDO to the development of positive links between visitors and the prison. To establish the role firmly and to encourage proactivity, however, the role requires to be defined and time and resources clearly set aside to allow development to take place. A programme of training for staff *in* the role and for all staff *about* the role is also needed.

Lifer Liaison Officer

6.132 The Lifer Liaison Officer (LLO) was a Residential Supervisor who had been responsible for that function for only about 3 months. She had received no formal training for those duties but had visited HMP Glenochil to obtain some advice from the LLO there.

6.133 At the time of the inspection, there were 6 prisoners serving Life and 1 without limit of time, though 2 of the Lifers were currently in the State Hospital at Carstairs. A Lifer discussion group had recently been introduced and consideration was being given to the re-introduction of the system whereby such prisoners were allowed time-out breaks from their work parties at summer and Christmas and special events such as outside speakers and barbecues were organised for them. In order to ensure that the particular needs of the Lifers were being properly catered for, the LLO was in regular discussion with the Cognitive Skills Officer.

Comment

6.134 Given the special needs of Lifers in a number of important areas including parole, sentence planning, personal development and addressing the reasons for offending behaviour etc, we consider that the LLO should be fully conversant with Lifer needs. The postholder should therefore be given the opportunity to undertake proper training consistent with the role and should have sound interviewing and counselling skills. It is unfair to both the LLO and to the Lifers to depend on such a low level of experience as currently exists at Cornton Vale albeit that the postholder is commendably keen to do her best.

7. PRIMARY SERVICES

Catering

7.1 Staffing in the kitchen comprised a Supervisor and 4 Catering Officers who operated on the normal early and late shift attendance pattern. They were supported by a party of 14 prisoners, half of whom worked from 0730-1300 hours and the remainder from 1300-1700 hours. The normal size of the work party was 10 but because of a lack of work opportunities in other parts of the Institution it had been increased to its present level of 14.

7.2 No food handling training had been provided since 1992, the reason given being that it would have required catering staff to provide classroom tuition and there was no spare capacity to allow for that. Two members of staff were shortly due to attend College to obtain an appropriate Diploma and the current proposal was that 50% of all staff and prisoners involved in food handling would then be trained by March 1997. The intention was to start this training in August and target those who were most frequently involved in food handling.

7.3 Whilst we acknowledge that efforts are now being made to address this shortfall, we were greatly disappointed to learn that it had reached the stage that it had. We therefore suggest that the Governor should review the current proposals to determine whether any steps can be taken to speed up the process of training all staff and prisoners involved in food handling. (For example, we noted that staff in the Blocks were handling food without wearing disposable gloves.)

7.4 For convicted prisoners, an advance menu system was in operation which worked on a 4 week cycle. Breakfast on Monday to Friday comprised cereal, toast, jam and tea followed by a snack lunch from a choice of 2 dishes. On Saturday and Sunday, breakfast and lunch were replaced by a 'brunch', for which again there were 2 choices. The evening meal offered 3 choices and comprised a main course and a sweet. A supper bun was also provided. The menu choices were recorded on computer and the choices made by the convicted prisoners were then prepared on a pro-rata basis for Remands.

7.5 All menus had been checked by the Community Dietician from Forth Valley Health Board who had confirmed that they were more than adequate from a nutritional point of view. For our part, we sampled the meals on a regular basis and found some variations in quality, quantity and presentation.

7.6 The evening meal was being served at 1645 hours which did not comply with the relevant SPS Operating Standard. We were told that plans had been made to alter this to 1730 hours, however, those proposals had had to be put back because staff were in dispute with the Governor over the effect which it would have had on staff attendance patterns. All other meals were being provided at appropriate times.

7.7 We were also advised of proposals to extend the kitchen later in the financial year. Two existing store-rooms were to be converted into staff changing and rest areas with new purpose-built stores being built on vacant ground adjacent to the kitchen. It was also intended as part of that refurbishment programme to provide proper changing facilities for prisoners - at present the lack of such a facility meant that prisoners had to walk to and from the kitchen in their whites.

7.8 In the report of our short inspection in 1995, we had criticised the food distribution arrangements which at that time had involved the meals being delivered to the Blocks in insulated boxes and then frequently left for lengthy periods on open plates in the serveries which meant that the food was often cold. The Institution had since purchased a number of heated trolleys and though these had clearly resolved the problem of providing hot meals at the point of delivery, a number of other difficulties had been created.

7.9 Under the new arrangements, after the food had been prepared in the kitchen it was placed in the trolleys which were then kept warm until they were collected by staff and prisoners from each of the accommodation Blocks. The trolleys were then pushed from the kitchen across some very uneven surfaces to the various Blocks without any protection from the weather. They were pushed up ramps (which had to be built for the trolleys) and bumped over metal door stops which inevitably caused food spillage and could in time lead to the

trolleys being damaged, as well as increasing the risk of various accidents; a number of minor accidents had already occurred.

7.10 The trolleys were then taken to a central distribution point, which was usually one of the kitchens on the ground floor of the Blocks, where prisoners then queued up at the door on a section by section basis before carrying their meals on open plates back to their relevant dining area. Again, this increased the risk of accidents as prisoners often had to carry their food over relatively long distances in many cases involving walking up a flight of stairs, all of which goes on as other prisoners are moving to join the queue. After each meal, the trolleys had to be cleaned and returned to the kitchen but facilities for washing such items of equipment in the accommodation Blocks were far from adequate.

7.11 As noted above, there is no doubt that the new system has resolved the problem of food temperature at the point of delivery. Temperature readings were recorded every day and it was clear that they were well in excess of the prescribed minimum levels. That said, the new system had created a new set of different problems.

7.12 We discussed our concerns about the new system with the SPS's Catering Adviser who confirmed that pushing trolleys in the open air from a kitchen to serving points was fairly common practice in other organisations - eg hospitals. However, he shared our concerns about the uneven surfaces, the door ramps and door stops, the accidents which had occurred to date and the practice of prisoners carrying their meals back to their dining areas on open plates. He confirmed also that the type of trolley used at Cornton Vale, though good for transporting hot food, was not the type from which food should be served directly.

7.13 It may be, therefore, that the answer would be for the trolleys to remain in the Blocks and as soon as the food was ready, for it then to be transported in insulated boxes to the Blocks by electric buggy and put into the heated trolleys prior to being served. Prisoners could then also be provided with covered dishes to reduce the risk of accident by spillage. This proposal has the support of the SPS's Catering Adviser and therefore we suggest that consideration be given to it as an alternative to the current arrangement.

7.14 Another issue which we considered in relation to the catering operation - and it was one which was causing a lot of understandable resentment among the prisoner population - was the withdrawal of the Homemaker scheme. Under that scheme, prisoners in various parts of the Institution had been able to do their own cooking. Food, sometimes partially cooked, was provided from the main kitchen and stored in the kitchens in the accommodation Blocks. Prisoners then cooked their own meals, which had the advantage of giving them a limited element of choice as to which meals they would have on which days and in addition, it helped them maintain some cooking skills.

7.15 The scheme had, however, been withdrawn for a number of reasons. Firstly, Environmental Health Officers (EHO) had criticised some of the food storage arrangements and had pointed out that being food preparation areas, the kitchens would require additional sinks. Secondly, there had been some management problems in that occasionally the prisoners would argue with each other and some would then find that either no meal had been prepared for them or even that there was no food left. Finally, there had been occasions when the prisoners could not agree amongst themselves as to who should prepare the meal with the result that no one did.

7.16 In our view, however, none of these problems was insurmountable. We noted from a recent EHO report that additional sinks will in any event have to be provided, as dishes and utensils for serving food still require to be washed in the kitchen areas. We see great merit in a properly managed Homemaker scheme and believe that it should be re-introduced as part of the progression scheme at the top end of the regime. In each area where it is introduced, there could be one prisoner whose job it is to keep the whole area clean and to prepare the bulk of the meals for the prisoners in the Unit during the working week, with others sharing the cooking at weekends.

7.17 In our view, it is important that prisoners - and in particular those serving long sentences - should be given the opportunity to enhance their cooking skills and accordingly we **recommend** the re-introduction of the Homemaker scheme on the lines suggested above. If it proves to be a success then we see no reason why a similar scheme could not be extended

again to other parts of the Institution. The scheme has worked extremely effectively in the past - we believe that with good management it can work well again.

Comment

7.18 We were very impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment shown by the Catering staff and by the way in which they were managing to get the best out of the prisoner work party. The kitchen itself was very clean and it was pleasing to note that staff had conducted a hazard analysis and were moving towards setting up a safe environment. Facilities for staff and prisoners were rather cramped and should therefore benefit from the refurbishment work which is due to start shortly.

7.19 As will be noted from the previous paragraphs, however, our main concerns related to the food transportation arrangements and the withdrawal of the Homemaker scheme, but we have offered suggestions on both of these areas. We trust also that the local staff dispute will be resolved soon so that the evening meal can be served at a more acceptable time. Overall, however, we were pleased to hear some favourable comments about the food from prisoners which is perhaps an indication that things are on the right lines.

Social Work

7.20 The staffing complement of the social work unit was one Team Manager, 2 full-time and one part-time social workers and a Secretary. At the time of our inspection, however, one of the full-time posts was vacant though it was being advertised. There was also an addictions worker attached to the Unit who spent 3 days per week in the Institution - see paragraph 4.5.

7.21 The unit had experienced major staff changes in recent times. The Manager had only taken up his post in November 1995 and the part-time worker had been appointed just prior to our inspection; the vacant post was the result of the retirement of the previous post-holder in March 1996. We were advised that the staffing requirements of the unit would possibly be reviewed as the result of an audit which was being carried out by the Local Authority at the

request of prison management. The main reason for the audit was to provide a clearer picture as to the level of social work service which would be required when the male YOs arrived at the Institution. Because that audit was ongoing, the part-time worker had been given only a 6 month contract as the prison felt that this would provide more flexibility when any revised staffing requirements were due to be implemented.

7.22 Another issue regarding staffing was in relation to the Secretary's post. In order to reduce costs and to help establish an integrated administrative system for the whole prison, the Governor had decided to replace the Local Authority employed person by an SPS employee. The Local Authority had opposed that move and had eventually removed its computer equipment from the Institution, leaving the unit with no information system. At the time of our inspection, a bid was in the process of being made to have a SPIN terminal installed.

7.23 Accommodation for the unit was satisfactory. Located next to the Health Centre, there was adequate office and conference space, the latter area being designated for groupwork (though none was actually taking place) and for social work visits. As noted above, the accommodation was also used by the addictions worker as well as the Psychologist.

7.24 The team manager met on a regular basis with the Resources and Services manager to discuss issues related to the work of the unit. There was also a quarterly meeting involving the Governor, the team manager and the external Social Work Supervisor in order to monitor progress on the social work management plan. Arrangements were also in place for formal supervision meetings with all members of staff.

7.25 On arriving at the unit, the team manager had carried out a customer survey among the prisoner population in an attempt to gauge individuals' reactions to the level of service currently being provided and to try to get some ideas as to how it might be improved. An encouraging 60% response was achieved and a report of the summary of that exercise is contained at Annex 7 to this report.

7.26 Prisoners admitted to the Institution were given an information leaflet about the Social work unit as part of the Reception process. However, one of the difficulties highlighted by unit staff was that of identifying those admissions who were likely to be the most vulnerable and who, therefore, ought to be receiving priority attention. Recent suicides in the Institution has only served to increase awareness of the importance of such identification. There did, however, seem to be some difficulties between the social work unit and prison management on this issue.

7.27 We were told that prior to the introduction of SPIN, staff in the residential Blocks would telephone the unit to inform staff there of anyone who fell into the 'at risk' category. However, it was claimed that the information now held on SPIN did not properly identify those who required attention which meant that social work staff had to spend a great deal of time trying to elicit the appropriate information. It was also the unit's belief that it was prison management's responsibility to provide the unit with all the appropriate information.

7.28 Management's view on this issue was that all the information which the social work unit needed was in fact available and that it was their responsibility to obtain it. Reference was made to a new Security/Movements post which was about to be introduced and it was hoped that that would enable better channels of communication to be opened up. Clearly, however, this is a crucial area which needs to be resolved quickly and we suggest that urgent discussions should be held with a view to setting out clear guidelines as to how information regarding vulnerable prisoners can be exchanged.

7.29 The social work manager was a member of the Suicide Risk Management Board and he also chaired a weekly Social Work/Healthcare meeting. Others attending that forum were the psychiatrist, the MO, nursing staff, Discipline Officer representatives from Romeo and Yankee Blocks, the addictions worker and a representative from senior management in the prison. This was regarded as a very useful forum for discussing issues of common ground and did go some way towards identifying ways of dealing with vulnerable prisoners.

7.30 We were disappointed to learn that there was no routine interviewing of admissions but rather staff from the unit made themselves available for surgeries twice a week in the

Remand Block. We have suggested, therefore, that a system should be put in place whereby at the very least every Remand prisoner is interviewed by a member of the social work unit as soon as possible after admission - see paragraph 6.17.

7.31 Following recent suicides in the Institution, unit staff had responded to a management request to become more visible in the accommodation Blocks in order to support prisoners and staff and to try to help identify vulnerable prisoners. One of the disadvantages in adopting such a profile was that some of the priorities contained in the unit's management plan had to be shelved. It also led to social work staff taking on more of a welfare role which they considered was more appropriate to Discipline staff - and it was claimed that that had led to a situation where no one was really clear as to what their role was.

Comment

7.32 Throughout our discussions with social work staff, the constant theme to which they all returned was that of the suicides in the Institution and the effect which they had - and were still having - on all staff. It was very clear that they had affected the work of the unit which in many ways had had to be diverted away from its task, resulting in staff assuming other responsibilities, such as the welfare role. There was a pressing need for these matters to be resolved as quickly as possible in order to enable the unit to resume its normal functioning.

7.33 One of the difficulties for the unit was that it was not working with a full staff complement and it was to be hoped, therefore, that the staffing audit would be completed soon and that the vacant post would be filled. It is only with such a complement that the unit will be able properly to fulfil all its tasks. In addition to the existing difficulties, the unit was having to gear itself up for the forthcoming arrival of the male YOs. It was estimated that in order to provide a proper level of service for those additional numbers, the existing part-time post would have to be upgraded to a full-time basis.

Chaplaincy and Religious Worship

7.34 Three Chaplains attended the Institution; a Church of Scotland Minister for 12 hours per week and 8 hours for a Roman Catholic Priest and Sister.

7.35 The Chaplains appeared to work well as a team and on each alternate week they visited the Induction Unit and the Remand Block to meet with and talk to the prisoners there. On those days they also visited the other Blocks to follow up any requests made by prisoners to see them. They considered those sessions to be particularly useful and referred to the excellent relationships which they had built up with staff, particularly those in Sierra Block. Contacts with representatives of other religions were made as required.

7.36 The purpose-built Chaplaincy Centre at Cornton vale is probably the best in the SPS and in addition to the excellent Chapel for religious worship, there are a number of offices and meeting rooms. Services were held on Sunday mornings but the average attendance at Mass was only about 2, whilst the 20-30 who attended the Church of Scotland Service tended mainly to be Remand prisoners.

7.37 The Chaplains expressed some concern over the fact that the Centre was increasingly used for a variety of other purposes and that on many occasions, little respect was paid to the facility. They had no objection to its being used for certain types of visit, but they frequently encountered such things as projectors being left on the Communion table or furniture being moved around and not replaced. They had voiced their concerns in writing about such problems but no action had apparently been taken.

7.38 There did, in fact, appear to be some difficulty over the relationship between the Chaplains and senior management in the Institution. The Chaplains said that over the last few years they had gradually felt that they were no longer really a part of the establishment and suggested that that had resulted from the many changes in staff (particularly at senior level) and the increase in workload for senior managers, leaving less time for meetings to discuss strategies and future policies. Their overall view of the Institution was that the atmosphere had changed for the worse and that the whole place needed a lift.

7.39 Apart from the services provided by the Chaplains there was no other form of religious input. At one time there had been some involvement by Prison Fellowship but some problems in relationships between their representatives and the Chaplains led to that being withdrawn.

Comment

7.40 As noted above, Cornton Vale has first class facilities for religious worship and we were impressed with the commitment and willingness of the Chaplains whom we met. We were therefore disappointed to learn that they considered that they were becoming more and more distant from senior management. We believe therefore that there would be benefit in establishing a more formal dialogue between management and the Chaplaincy team so that, for example, concerns about the use of the Chaplaincy Centre could be discussed in detail and a mutually acceptable agreement reached.

Canteen

7.41 A single canteen facility located in the Central Block served the whole Institution. Remand prisoners had access on Monday and Friday mornings; convicted prisoners' access was all day Wednesday (when wages were paid out) and on Thursday morning. The facility was spacious and bright and carried an extensive range of goods. It was run by a civilian member of staff (who also managed the Stores), assisted by a prisoner. Stocks were purchased from local cash and carry outlets and all the procedures were in accordance with SPS instructions.

7.42 No price list was posted at the canteen but we were assured that lists were made available to the accommodation Blocks despite the fact that they were regularly torn down by the prisoners. In our opinion, however, a clear price list should be on display at the canteen and arrangements should be made to ensure that lists cannot be removed by prisoners in the residential areas.

7.43 There was no formal sundry purchase scheme and prisoners who wanted to buy any items not available in the canteen submitted a request to the General Office who would then either authorise or reject the request. The canteen Officer made a trip once a week into Stirling for the approved items.

7.44 We were advised that there were proposals under consideration to de-centralise the canteen and have one in each Block, including Bravo for the male YOs. These smaller facilities would be managed by Residential staff thereby releasing the present canteen Officer for other duties and obviating the need for staff in the General Office to make decisions about sundry purchases. We have some reservations, however, about the decentralisation proposal.

7.45 Profits from the canteen were placed in the prison's Common Good Fund which was used mainly to pay television and snack machine rentals. This fund could also be used to purchase additional recreational equipment etc for prisoners.

Laundry

7.46 The laundry is situated next to the main kitchen in the Central Block and was staffed by one Officer who was normally assisted by 4 prisoners. Unfortunately, at the time of our inspection most of the laundry equipment was so old that it was now beyond economic repair and the equipment which was functioning was inadequate for the demands of the establishment. In addition, the working conditions for staff and prisoners had deteriorated to the extent that the situation was becoming a health and safety concern.

7.47 Gradually over recent years, more and more domestic washing machines had been located in the accommodation Blocks, partly as a result of requests from prisoners for such a facility and partly because of the inability of the laundry to cope, due to the poor condition of its equipment. This, along with the loss of a number of small outside contracts, meant that the number of items being processed by the laundry had dropped from 20,000+ to 2,500 per month. Obviously this is a most unsatisfactory situation.

7.48 We are aware of a national laundry working party which has recently completed an assessment of needs of the whole SPS and we would urge that remedial action is taken soon in relation to this longstanding and unsatisfactory situation.

Estates

7.49 At the time of our inspection, the Estates Manager had a team of 4, including one Clerk of Works, one Estate Officer and one clerk; the Contracts Manager had a complement of 9 which included a Supervisor, administration staff and tradesmen covering all the appropriate trades.

7.50 Accommodation, stores and offices were adequate, though some facilities were shared between the 2 teams. However, the existing lock store was found to be inadequate for its purpose - a situation which could be eased by the return of old and surplus locks to the SPS central lock store.

7.51 Small repairs were up to date but WTI10 (Legionellosis) had not yet been put out to contract and WTI9 (testing of electrical equipment) was not being carried out. The previous year's minor works programme had been completed and a number of projects was planned for 1996-97. These included alterations to Reception, the conversion of an existing workshop into a VT domestic cleaning area and a group counselling room and changes to the Health Centre. A cookhouse extension costing £60,000 was also planned but a start date had not been agreed.

Fire Prevention

7.52 There was a separate Fire Committee for the Institution which was chaired by the Estates Manager, who was also the Fire Precautions Officer (FPO). The other members of the Committee were the Deputy FPO (who was an Estates Officer), the STO and 2 Residential Officers. Members of the Committee had received the appropriate training at the Scottish Fire Services Training School at Gullane. The Committee met every 4 months.

7.53 In overall terms, we were satisfied with the fire precaution measures which had been taken within the Institution. A very good relationship had been established with the local Fire Brigade whose staff visited the establishment on a regular basis to familiarise themselves with the layout. A visit had also recently been made to look over Bravo Block which was being refurbished pending the arrival of the male YOs. Evacuation drills were carried out with a full report and debrief done on each occasion. A proposal to make a video film of a drill was planned.

7.54 All appliances throughout the Institution were checked on a regular basis and proper records were being maintained. The Deputy FPO was responsible for this part of the job in addition to which he regularly went round the establishment checking on general fire precaution measures and it was estimated that about 30% of his working week was spent on fire precaution duties.

7.55 Fires in the Institution were infrequent and tended to be very minor. Nevertheless, each one was properly recorded and the Fire Brigade duly notified. The establishment had recently taken delivery of 40 new fire extinguishers and an exercise was ongoing to replace the luminous fire exit arrow indicators. We noted that there was a fire alarm system in the Administration and Central Block areas but there was no smoke alarm system in the establishment. The Institution was due a formal inspection by HM Fire Inspectorate in 1997.

7.56 One area which gave us some cause for concern was in connection with the new breathing apparatus. Originally, 85% of the staff had been trained in its use and the equipment had therefore been introduced. However, staff had not been attending (or been able to attend) their refresher courses with the result that it had now been withdrawn from use. We therefore urge management to take the appropriate steps to ensure that all relevant staff are properly and regularly trained in the use of this equipment.

7.57 We noted also that where prisoners were allowed to have personal items in their rooms - eg their own duvet covers - no checks were being made to ensure that they were properly fire retardant; such checks ought to be introduced forthwith.

Health and Safety

7.58 At the time of our inspection, arrangements for the management of Health and Safety (H & S) issues was in a state of flux. About 3 months prior to the inspection, the Estates Manager had assumed the role of Chairman of the H & S Committee but had now also had to take on the role of Coordinator in view of the absence on long-term sick leave of that postholder. An attempt had been made to establish a new Committee but no one had put their name forward. Unit Managers had then been invited to submit names but at the first meeting of the new Committee, 6 'members' had failed to turn up. One of the first tasks for the new Chairman was, therefore, the establishment of a proper Committee structure and a regular meeting pattern and we trust that his efforts will receive support from senior management.

7.59 A local H & S policy was produced in 1994 and copies had been distributed throughout the Institution; one of the functions for the new Committee will be to update the existing document. Proper records were being kept of all accidents and first aid boxes were maintained by the Health Centre. There had been a recent H & S Inspection by the SPS Adviser and we noted that all of the items highlighted in the subsequent report either had been dealt with or appropriate action was in hand.

7.60 The H & S Coordinator expressed some concerns about the movement of the heated trolleys from the kitchen to the accommodation Blocks - see paragraphs 7.8-13. The H & S representatives had not been consulted about their purchase and already there had been a few minor accidents.

Energy Management

7.61 The Energy Committee was chaired by the Estates Manager and had a membership which was drawn from a wide range of functions throughout the Institution. In the past year, the Committee had met on 2 occasions but there were now plans to move to a quarterly meeting schedule.

7.62 The principal energy sources were electricity, gas and oil and the Institution was on target to meet their savings in all areas except oil where, at the time of the inspection, there was surplus usage. It was hoped that further savings in overall energy costs would result from the major work which had recently been done to install new external pipework. The old pipes had had a number of leaks resulting in heat losses and it was anticipated that the new system would be more efficient. As an additional measure to reduce costs further, electric light sensors had been installed in a number of areas in the Institution. Posters advocating energy savings had also been put up at various locations but as in many establishments, there were great difficulties in trying to encourage staff and prisoners to act on the message.

7.63 Sub-meters for recording energy usage were available in the laundry, cookhouse and boiler-room and a case had recently been submitted to SPS HQ for additional meters to be installed. One of the new areas targeted for meters was the accommodation Blocks where the proposal was that staff there would then be allocated a budget specifically for energy costs and would then be able to use part of any savings for buying additional items of equipment for the areas concerned. Meter readings were taken monthly.

8. HEALTH CARE

Introduction

8.1 There had been a number of recent changes in the Health Centre since the last inspection. On a positive note, the new nursing structure which had been introduced just a year previously, had begun to settle and was showing considerable potential for a positive contribution to the quality and range of services on offer. Additionally, a new Medical Secretary had just been appointed and was expected to relieve the Clinical Supervisor and her nursing staff of a considerable bureaucratic burden which it was hoped would allow them to concentrate more on clinical duties.

8.2 There also had been a number of negative developments. Plans to develop the ground floor of the Health Centre for healthcare expansion had been abandoned in order to provide a separate cells area for male YOs. At the time of our inspection, Health Centre staff and visiting Specialists were therefore having to operate in cramped conditions which often seriously affected patient privacy.

8.3 The MOs, who were GPs from a local practice, had just resigned after many years of providing medical services to the Institution. A number of factors had contributed to this decision, not least the increasing workload that the individual doctors had been encountering and which had latterly started to encroach on their community practice. When interviewed, they said that they had left with regret but had found it more and more difficult to find the time to deal with the number of drug damaged prisoners who were appearing in the treatment room.

Accommodation and Equipment

8.4 The Health Centre was situated on 2 floors, with most activity taking place on the top storey. This area comprised a small reception/waiting area, a doctor's consulting room, a general purpose combined consultation and treatment room (which also contained the medical records of the genito-urinary specialist and family planning notes), a nursing office, a

small administration office, a medical records room, a combined changing/rest room and an office for the Clinical Supervisor.

8.5 The ground floor, which was formerly the prison hospital ward, consisted of a number of rooms - 2 of which were those set aside as separate cells for YOs. Another room was being used for the storage of old medical records. Emergency resuscitation equipment was held for immediate use on this level.

8.6 Medical equipment was found to be generally adequate and we made careful note of the fact that resuscitation equipment was checked on a regular weekly basis. The only notable omission was cryotherapy equipment for use by the genito-urinary medicine specialist (see paragraph 8.43).

Comment

8.7 The waiting area upstairs was small and the reception window offered very little privacy for prisoners talking to a nurse. Nevertheless, the doctor's room was adequate and close enough to the nursing office to allow medical records to be passed easily when treatment was required. The room used by the visiting genito-urinary specialist and the doctor who provided family planning services was reasonably sized, but nevertheless unsuitable for the intimate type of medical examination and procedures being undertaken in this room. A screen was used to maintain privacy during examinations but it would be much more appropriate for a proper consulting room to be provided for this work. Despite its unsuitability, the same room was used by a nurse for counselling.

8.8 Meanwhile, the office used by the nursing staff was about adequate but was often congested at busy periods. The storage of records in the small records office was well organised, although we understand that medical records may eventually be stored on SPIN. A limited amount of medical information was already held on a freestanding computer. The nurses' changing room and rest room were barely adequate and it would be much more appropriate if separate changing facilities were provided. The Clinical Supervisor's office was about adequate for the purpose. Plans were in hand to turn the annex next to the MO's

consulting room into a clinical treatment room which should improve some of the treatment facilities within the Health Centre. Expansion downstairs would, however, greatly improve privacy and efficiency.

Nursing Staff

8.9 The nursing allocation for 24 hour cover was a Clinical Nursing Supervisor with 10 full-time nurse equivalents working under her supervision, less a current shortfall in the complement of 1.5. Agency nurses were used to provide support when permanent staff were unavailable. One nurse was receiving training in family planning and another in counselling as part of her work with the genito-urinary specialist. The Institution was also fortunate in having a nurse who had previously gained psychiatric qualifications.

Comment

8.10 A disproportionate amount of the nurses' working day was given over to the distribution of medication, which took place in the Health Centre and in some of the Blocks. Although this has been reduced to a twice daily routine it involved a great deal of valuable nursing time which could be spent far more profitably in other nursing tasks. As a first step, the provision of pre-packaged courses of certain drugs would help to considerably reduce the workload (see also paragraph 8.18).

Medical Staff

8.11 Primary medical care (including out of hours cover) was being provided by locum doctors as an interim measure following the resignation of the MOs. One of the locum doctors had expertise in dealing with drug abuse, which was a bonus given the problems with which prisoners were arriving in ever increasing numbers.

8.12 Over the course of a month, the medical and nursing team had an average of 10 contacts with every prisoner, which related to the examination of admissions and liberations, the daily sick parades and planned appointments with the MOs. This heavy workload, whilst

in part reflecting the turnover at the prison, was predominantly an indicator of the very specific needs of the population. This growth was similarly reflected in the issuing of prescribed medication, where the average number of prescriptions had doubled over a period of only 3 years, although the population had remained much the same.

8.13 In the preceding year there had been 62 admissions to outside hospitals, most of which were to Stirling Royal Infirmary. Twenty five per cent of these admissions were for seizures associated with withdrawal from benzodiazepines, whilst a further 11% were related to psychiatric problems. The remaining admissions were for a range of medical conditions which were in keeping with the age and gender of the prisoners.

Comment

8.14 The general healthcare arrangements were coping, but only just. In the longer term there must be a return to a small core of MOs who can provide continuity in the development of long term and cost effective medical care. Prisoners at this small Institution are highly dependent on the medical services as the number of contacts with the health care team and rising prescription rates demonstrate - with 90% of prescriptions being for problems which arose directly from drug abuse or associated psychiatric or medical conditions.

8.15 The particular problems which resulted directly from prisoners' lifestyles demanded an intensive input by medical and nursing staff (and other specialists) - the co-ordination and structuring of which requires continuity - hence the need for primary medical care within the Institution to be reorganised so that much more stable arrangements can be provided. A medical team leader with responsibility for co-ordinating the work of medical colleagues would be one way of achieving this and is discussed in more detail at paragraphs 8.39-40.

8.16 The protocols for managing prisoners with addiction problems should also be re-examined since a high proportion of admissions will have been prescribed methadone in the community to treat their drug habits. Problems can arise in prison for some prisoners as a result of lack of continuity in maintenance on this drug. A re-evaluation of drug reduction protocols might go some way towards helping to reduce any medical complications which

can often be associated with multiple drug usage. Medical support to the new ASU would also be greatly improved by such measures.

Pharmacy Services

8.17 The Clinical Supervisor was responsible for the prison's stocks of dangerous drugs, with the monitoring of general pharmacy stocks and the dispensing of medication being carried out by the nurses, who also made up the weekly order for resupply. Information on medication for each prisoner was maintained in a kardex system.

8.18 Most prescriptions were for generic preparations which helped keep costs down. Costs will be further contained when the proposed drug formulary is introduced. Drug dispensing took place on a twice daily basis which placed huge demands on nursing time (and at times on Discipline staff). There is a pressing need to free up nursing time so that more time could be devoted to talking and listening to prisoners on a one to one basis or in groups. This might help to influence a reduction in the incidences of self harm in the Institution and might enhance the opportunities for health promotion and preventative medicine by nursing staff with Specialist input when required. It would be sensible, therefore, to look more closely at some form of separate provision of pharmacy services for this particular Institution and we therefore so **recommend**.

Psychiatric Services

8.19 Psychiatric services were provided by 2 consultant psychiatrists both of whom had trained in forensic psychiatry. Both held weekly clinics totalling 4 sessions, which was only just sufficient to cope with current levels of case work. The majority of women who were seen were vulnerable and insecure, with a history of physical and often sexual abuse, as well as frequently having multiple drug abuse problems. Cases were therefore invariably complex. Referrals were normally made by the MOs with whom there were weekly meetings. Referrals from multi-disciplinary case meetings within each Block should also take place, but this mechanism did not exist (see paragraph 4.17.3).

8.20 The psychiatrists indicated that there was little change in the ratio of psychotic prisoners being admitted to the establishment. However, the number of those with acute depression and anxiety was increasing, which led to the conclusion that it would be sensible to increase the number of psychiatrists' sessions from 4 to 6 now, as a pre-emptive measure, and we so **recommend**. This would also allow the psychiatrists to do much more remedial work with patients before they are returned to the community.

8.21 The effectiveness of psychiatric intervention would also be much improved if there was more coordination between the drug addictions worker, psychologist and psychiatrists. We **recommend** that a community psychiatric nurse post should also be established, with this individual working with vulnerable prisoners in the prison and in the community (as for example now occurs at HMP Barlinnie). This is becoming an urgent need due to the rising levels of drug abuse and there is a need to establish much closer links with the Health Boards in the areas from which the prisoners are drawn. Greater Glasgow, for example should receive priority for such a service, as 80% of prisoners come from that area. In turn, properly coordinated follow-up on release might help reduce recidivism and other community problems which, because of the lack of this small but vital link, are currently missing. The disturbing number of drug related deaths which are reported to be occurring in the community amongst recently released prisoners also highlights this need.

8.22 The psychiatrists did not have their own consulting rooms though there had previously been a plan for them to have their own rooms in the lower storey of the Health Centre, this opportunity had again been lost to the requirements for male separate cells. The 2 specialists therefore had to interview patients in the accommodation Blocks, which was a barely acceptable solution.

8.23 The psychiatrists said that they did not think the Institution was ready to deal with the arrival of male prisoners. The number of damaged females was more than enough to contend with at present.

Genito-urinary Medicine

8.24 The genito-urinary specialist provided a weekly clinic for prisoners, with an average of 20 patients attending either through self referral or via the MOs. She was assisted by a specialist nurse who was being trained in counselling. This constituted a major part of the work in connection with HIV and resulted in a need for considerable pre and post test counselling. Some 69 prisoners had volunteered to be tested for HIV and Hepatitis B in the last 12 months and in view of the workload involved and the need for continuity, we suggest that another nurse should be trained as a back-up counsellor to cover leave and sickness absences.

8.25 The room in which the genito-urinary specialist held her clinics and examined patients was unsuitable, and because there was a constant risk of interruption during examination, it did not allow for sufficient privacy, hence our suggestion at paragraph 8.7 that a separate room should be provided. Her work would be greatly assisted by the provision of cryotherapy equipment.

8.26 The doctor said that she was also keen routinely to vaccinate appropriate prisoners against Hepatitis B, which seemed to us to be an eminently sensible precaution and was in any event recommended in Department of Health guidelines. We therefore suggest that such a vaccination programme should take place.

8.27 The doctor was a consultant at the Royal Infirmary in Glasgow and had built up strong links with the genito-urinary medical services in the local areas to which prisoners were released at the end of their sentences. The high proportion of women from the West of Scotland in the prison population meant that in the majority of cases, a reasonable follow-up rate was being achieved, via her own clinic and local family doctors. This was a prime example of what could be achieved in the provision of medical throughcare.

Family Planning Services

8.28 A visiting doctor attended every fortnight to provide contraceptive and family planning advice. Her clinic took place in the same area which was provided for the genito-urinary medicine specialist and suffered from a similar lack of privacy. She was supported by one of the nurses who was receiving training in family planning and whose work was essential for the provision of ongoing advice to prisoners. However, the demands of other nursing tasks and the dispensing of medication was reducing the opportunity for this nurse fully to deploy her skills - particularly in relation to the needs of prisoners when they were nearing release. When time and finances allow, a further nurse should be trained in this speciality to provide additional cover. We also suggest that all prisoners are interviewed by the family planning nurse prior to release and that contraceptive arrangements are made where appropriate.

8.29 Family planning records were kept separately from the general medical records, but there might be advantages in combining them with the medical records to provide as much information as possible for the MOs when interviewing patients. The amalgamation of records would for example, greatly reduce problems in tracing cervical smear histories.

Chiropodist

8.30 The chiropodist visited each month, normally on the morning of the last Saturday.

Health Promotion

8.31 The Health Centre had a wide range of health information leaflets on display, though individuals appeared reluctant to take full advantage of them. However, the time which prisoners spend in Cornton Vale provides a unique opportunity for access to health education which in many cases is badly needed. Advantage should therefore be taken of nurses with specialist training to develop a proactive programme of health promotion. At present, opportunities were intermittent, though if more nursing time were to be freed up, then a much more comprehensive programme could be established. In turn, this would help to change the

orientation of the Institution towards the much needed therapeutic and educational role which is currently lacking.

Dentist

8.32 The Dentist was a local practitioner who attended the prison on average for 2 half day sessions per week, when she was assisted by a Dental Nurse. (The number of weekly sessions would, however, have to be increased on the arrival of the male prisoners.) The surgery, was located in the Health Centre and was well equipped.

8.33 The Dentist was satisfied with most arrangements: we in turn were gratified to note that a staff alarm had been installed in her surgery - a notable omission in several other prison surgeries.

Psychology Services

8.34 The postholder had returned to duty just as the inspection started, after being on maternity and sick leave for over a year. She was the first to agree that the vacuum that had been created by her absence was disturbing, given the nature of the population. She also recognised that whilst some of her casework would have been transferred to the psychiatrists, the majority would have gone untouched in her absence. A huge backlog had therefore been building up and she expected to be overwhelmed within a matter of weeks. It was suggested to us that a trainee psychologist (eg a recently qualified basic grade) should be found to provide additional temporary support.

8.35 After a year's absence, the psychologist said that there seemed to be a much greater undertow of bullying in the Institution which might be attributable to increasing levels of drug abuse and drug deals. Staff also seemed to her to be much more anxious.

8.36 Her immediate priorities included:

- Dealing with the immediate backlog of cases
- A greater focus on the needs of the Remand population
- The establishment of a ward for potentially suicidal prisoners
- More multi-disciplinary work and coordination amongst specialists.
- More psychology involvement in offending behaviour programmes.

Comment

8.37 We were relieved to find that psychology services had been restored but disappointed that given the serious problems presented by the prisoners, no replacement had been found to cover the postholder's absence. We fully concur with the psychologist's priority list but would add the need for psychology input into the ASU and the induction and assessment processes.

8.38 Given the size of the task, additional psychology sessions seem inescapable and we suggest that this is given urgent consideration.

Summary

8.39 Medical arrangements were working but only just, and sustained improvement is required as a priority. However, this can only begin when arrangements for medical cover are returned to a much more permanent basis, with priority being directed towards the appointment of 'team leader' with wide experience of dealing with drug abusers and we so **recommend**. The holder of this post should be required to work to a service level agreement which would set out the standards of service expected from the MO as well as the responsibilities of prison management. He or she would be required to work closely with the nursing team, medical specialist staff, social work staff and Management with a view to developing a strategy for contributing to the development of a therapeutic regime which would take into account the special nature of the prison population. This need not be a full-

time appointment, but would provide the major medical input to the primary health care team, with the support of other doctors who might come from the local area.

8.40 The establishment of a permanent medical team could in turn provide opportunities to reconsider a drug reduction programme and provide an opportunity to work more closely with the ASU, both of which would help address the growing culture of drug dependency in the Institution. The development of closer links with drug rehabilitation workers in the community via an exchange of information on admission and on release, together with proper aftercare for prisoners, would also be much enhanced by these measures -ultimately to the potential advantage of the wider community.

8.41 Above all, a therapeutic environment needs to be developed, beginning with the Health Centre. This can primarily be achieved by reducing the amount of time which nurses are currently having to spend in the distribution of prescribed medication. The present arrangements for pharmacy services need to be re-assessed, hence our recommendation that alternative options be considered.

8.42 The psychiatrists provide a first class service but their work would be greatly improved by a limited increase in the number of sessions they provide, together with the attachment of a community psychiatric nurse who could work part-time in the prison and part-time in the community. The psychiatric workload alone justifies such a post, which could consolidate psychiatric work and further enhance the creation of a therapeutic regime.

8.43 The genito-urinary specialist's excellent work is not enhanced by the room in which she was required to consult and examine her patients. Cryotherapy equipment, which is an essential tool for treatment in this speciality, should be provided forthwith (at an estimated cost of £500). We also underline the excellent methods she deploys to follow up patients on release and which should be used as a model for other departments and specialisations particularly in relation to the fight against drug abuse.

8.44 The provision of family planning and contraceptive advice also needs re-examination. It should be possible to incorporate the work of family planning into primary medical care when the team is established.

8.45 The current physical layout of the Health Centre makes it difficult to maintain privacy and confidentiality and the arrival of males will greatly compound this problem. In our view, the Healthcare provision needs to be increased and as a result more space needs to be freed up for consulting rooms and the only logical place for this is in the ground floor. This should be made entirely available for the Health Centre and we so **recommend**.

8.46 With the above reorganisation complete and the re-allocation of some relatively inexpensive resources, it would be possible to create the foundations of a therapeutic environment. In a matter of months these small but important changes in emphasis could provide a Health Centre which would be entirely on top of, or even ahead of a difficult situation. This would be much more in keeping with the enthusiasm of its dedicated nursing team who are keen to help the growing stream of problematic female offenders who are now becoming dependent on their skills.

8.47 Steps should be taken to ensure that the Medical team increasingly becomes part of a multi-disciplinary approach to the management and care of prisoners.

9. STAFF AND MANAGEMENT

Complement

9.1 Staffing at the time of the inspection was as follows:-

		Complement	Actual Number in Post
Governor I/C		1	1
Deputy Governor and Custody Manager		1	1 (acting up)
Operations Manager		1	2
Resources and Services Manager		1	1 (also acting Deputy Governor)
Human Resources Manager		1	1
Management Assistant		0	1
Residential Staff	(i) Supervisors	12	12
	(ii) Officers	90	85
Operations Staff	(i) Supervisors	7	7
	(ii) Officers	48	39
	(iii) Civilian	1	1
Administration Staff	(i) Supervisor	1	1
	(ii) Officer	1	1
	(iii) Civilians	8	6
Estates Staff	(i) Manager	1	1
	(ii) Supervisor	1	1
	(iii) Officer	1	1
	(iv) Civilian	1	1
Contracts Staff	(i) Manager	1	1
	(ii) Supervisor	1	1
	(iii) Officer	1	1
	(iv) Civilians	8	8
Industrial Staff	(i) Supervisor	1	1
	(ii) Instructor	9	11
	(iii) Civilian	1	1
Catering Staff	(i) Supervisor	1	1
	(ii) Officers	4	4
PE Staff	(i) Officers	3	2
Staff Trainer		1	1
Medical Officers		2	temporary locum GPs
Nursing Staff	(i) Supervisor	1	1
	(ii) Practitioner Nurse	10	8.5
	(iii) Civilian Staff	1	1
# Psychiatrist		3	3
# Psychologist		1	1
# Dentist		2	2
Ø Social Work Staff	(i) Manager	1	1

	Complement	Actual Number in Post
(ii) Social Workers	3	2 (includes 1 part-time)
(iii) Civilian	1	1
# Ø Addictions Worker	1	1
* Education Coordinator	1	1
# * Teachers	5	5
# Chaplains	2	3

denotes part-time staff

Ø denotes local authority employees

* denotes employees of Stoke on Trent College of Further Education

Management

9.2 The senior management team consisted of the Governor and 5 functional managers covering the areas of Custody, Operations, Estates, Resources and Services and Human Resources. The Head of Custody also acted as Deputy Governor. All 5 managers reported direct to the Governor.

9.3 At the time of our inspection, the Governor had been in post for 2 years and the post of Deputy Governor was being covered on a temporary promotion basis following the transfer of the previous incumbent to a post in SPS HQ. (We were pleased to note that shortly after our inspection, a new Deputy Governor was appointed.) Of the remaining managers, the Head of Operations was awaiting a place on an external secondment and the Resources and Services Manager, who had some 2½ years total service, was fulfilling her own role and that of temporary Deputy Governor. During our inspection, 2 new managers were transferred to the team to cover Operations and Management Assistance (though there was a lack of clarity about the purpose of the new Management Assistant role).

9.4 We considered the management structure to be lean (as previously highlighted in our 1995 inspection), with an imbalance of workloads as between the busy posts of Deputy

Governor and Resources and Services Manager, and that of Operations Manager. It may well be helpful to review the responsibilities of each member of the Senior Management team with a view to a more equitable redistribution of duties. It was clear from discussion with some members of the management team that the pressure on such a small group, with varying levels of experience, of preparing and implementing a number of local initiatives including the ASU and Induction Units, Heathervale, planning for the arrival of male YOs etc and coping with a series of suicides, had placed an enormous strain on individual and team resources. We were therefore pleased to see that an additional member had been added to the team in a supporting role (ie Management Assistance) but this role will have to be clarified in relation to that of the management support post which is currently in operation.

9.5 Three managers apart from the Governor, the Estates Manager and the Human Resources (HR) Manager, undertook scheduled evening and night visits and attended one weekend in 3.

9.6 A new meetings structure was implemented in January 1996 which provided for a Governor's daily morning meeting, a weekly meeting of all departmental heads and a monthly management forum. Members of the senior management team also attended their own functional meetings as appropriate.

Comment

9.7 At the time of our inspection, the senior management team was in a state of considerable flux because of the vacant post at Deputy Governor, the imminent departure of one senior manager and the arrival of 2 new members to the team. Also, the previous 12 months had clearly been traumatic because of the suicides and their aftermath and because the team had been under considerable pressure of work.

9.8 Given that there is still much to do in the prison, we feel very strongly that the senior management team require a period of respite in order to develop their initiatives and particularly to plan for, and implement the regime changes which are urgently required. The new members of the team will also require some time and space to familiarise themselves

with the prison before they will be in a position to contribute effectively to the management task.

Human Resources

9.9 An HR manager had been appointed to the establishment as a result of a restructuring exercise at SPS HQ in 1994. She was involved in the selection of staff and in all aspects of their career development, including staff training. She was also responsible for the Staff Grievance procedure which had processed 15 cases last year; none was outstanding.

9.10 A number of issues was raised in discussion with the manager which included:-

9.10.1 *Staff Sickness:* At an average annual absence rate of 20.3 shifts per Officer per year, the establishment's sick absence levels were high and above the national average. (Five individuals on long term sick absence were included in these figures.) These levels of sickness and other staff shortages had led to significant problems throughout the year in covering posts. A local sick absence policy was, however, in place and refresher training for all managers in its operation was planned.

9.10.2 *Turnover:* Nine members of staff had been given early severance under the recent staffing structure review and 9 had taken early retirement. Annual turnover was about 16%, which compared favourably with national averages - although current membership of the Operations Group included a very high percentage of recent recruits (some 33%).

9.10.3 *Staff Complement:* We were unable to clarify with the HR manager whether there were genuine staffing shortages, or whether rostering arrangements were not as efficiently organised as they might have been - or whether both of these had a part to play in the difficulties which were being encountered in covering posts. We found some problems in the recording of staff hours and in the reliability of data analysis systems. We were also told by staff of erratic rostering and lack of continuity in posts. We observed genuine problems for staff in some areas in

stretching their resources properly to meet the demands on them. We have therefore suggested at paragraph 5.23 that there should be a thorough local review of both the staff complement and recording systems to determine whether there is an accurate match between demand and staff supply.

9.10.4 *Male/female staff balance:* Whilst equal opportunities considerations had to be recognised, many were now of the view that there were too many male Officers on the complement. This had the effect of causing shortages of female staff to undertake tasks such as body searches, hospital escorts, etc. The HR manager recognised the problem and was seeking ways of overcoming the demonstrable problems which had been created by the imbalance.

9.10.5 More consistent and accessible arrangements were required for post traumatic stress counselling following fatalities and other serious incidents.

Staff Training

9.11 The present Staff Training and Development Officer (STO) had been in post since August 1995, the post having lain vacant for about 2 months immediately prior to his appointment. There was a Staff Training Committee which was chaired by the HR manager with the other members being the STO and representatives from a wide range of functions across the establishment. The Committee met monthly to discuss and prioritise applications for external courses and generally to discuss training priorities for the Institution. Those priorities were linked to the local Strategic Plan which had provided the basis for the formal training plan for the Institution. Although efforts were made to stick to that plan, they were frequently overtaken by the need to provide training at short notice for central initiatives such as MDT or Personal Performance Plans, etc.

9.12 It was very disappointing to note that not a lot of training had been taking place for staff in the Institution. That situation had not been helped by the fact that because of staff shortages, a management decision had been taken to suspend all external training from June to November 1995. In common with many other establishments, Cornton Vale also suffered

from the problem of courses having to be cancelled at short notice because staff were being called away on other more urgent business. However, attempts were now being made to redress the balance.

9.13 The STO considered that responsibility for ensuring that staff were trained lay with line managers and therefore, a locally devised pro-forma for recording details of staff training had been produced for distribution to and completion by Supervisors. The STO saw himself as being very much a facilitator and a copy of the programme of training delivered recently clearly showed that significant use was made of other staff and outsiders to deliver training sessions. Overall, however, the Institution was almost 20% down on its target figure for 1995-96.

9.14 Facilities for delivering the training were very reasonable. The STO's office was located in the Central Block close to an adequately sized classroom with suitable equipment and training aids. A new resource centre was in the process of being established in an area previously occupied by the prisoners' library and it was hoped that this facility would be ready by June. Once opened, it would give staff access to a wide range of reading materials and provide a place for quiet study.

9.15 An area which gave us considerable cause for concern was the absence for some 12 months of any SVQ assessment process for probationary staff. We were told that the problem stemmed from the fact that there had been no co-ordinator for that function until that responsibility had been passed to the STO in November 1995. Since then a total of 7 staff had been trained as assessors and a further 3 were about to go through that process. Action plans to identify training and other needs and how the various targets were going to be achieved, had now been drawn up for all recruits who were part of the scheme. We were assured that the proper procedures were now in place to enable the assessments to be carried out properly. In addition to arranging local SVQ training, arrangements were also having to be made for male recruits to go to other establishments to gain competencies in certain aspects of the programme - eg searching techniques.

9.16 We were pleased to learn that those staff who might have to attend Court for any reason, had now each been provided with a copy of the competent witness booklet and that appropriate training sessions would be delivered by the STO.

Comment

9.17 Overall, we were disturbed by the lack of core training which had been going on in the establishment in recent times. There was no Personal Officer or sentence planning training and no training for skills in delivering the opportunity agenda. We were particularly concerned to learn about the complete lack of SVQ training for new recruits. The absence of such training was also a source of much concern and anxiety to staff who raised this point with us on a number of occasions.

9.18 We believe that there is an urgent need now to address the shortfall in training overall and given that actual training hours for 1995-96 were 20% down on the target figure, this should be given a high priority. We suggest therefore, that management should address this issue immediately with a view to ensuring that adequate training is made available to all staff, including the provision of a training programme specifically for staff in the Operations group to ensure that they are given the appropriate competencies to discharge their role effectively.

Staff Facilities

9.19 At the time of our inspection, staff facilities comprised a small muster room adjacent to the main Gate area in which staff could heat food, eat their meals and watch television. It comprised a small dining and cooking area and a cramped smoking area containing a number of soft chairs. The facility was too small adequately to cope with the demand placed on it - particularly in the afternoon, when it was not uncommon for staff members to have to stand to eat their meals. This overcrowding problem will be greatly exacerbated should the prison move to a system of single meal breaks as planned. A temporary building located outside the Reception area acted as the staff locker room.

9.20 A new muster room and locker area was nearing completion when we visited but given that the dining and rest area would only be about 1.5 square metres larger than the existing facility, there appeared little to be gained by staff in the move apart from the provision of showers and toilets in the locker areas for male and female staff. The new muster room was located above the stores and because the area had previously been used for storage, there was limited natural light from small high windows and no mechanical aid to ventilation beyond an extractor fan in the cooking area. At the time of our visit no decision had been made on the matter of smoking policy, but given that one main room will be used for cooking and eating as well as resting, it should in our view be strictly non smoking for obvious reasons of health and hygiene.

9.21 We were extremely disappointed that the excellent staff restaurant facility situated just outside the prison had been closed for cost reasons. The restaurant had been much appreciated by staff who welcomed the opportunity to have their breaks away from the prison and it was a source of employment and training for prisoners. The closure of the restaurant had detrimentally affected staff morale and had contributed to the prevailing inadequacy of staff facilities. Whilst we acknowledge that previous staffing arrangements for the restaurant may have been relatively costly, our view is that the facility should not have been closed until a reasonable alternative had been found. We therefore strongly suggest that management should vigorously investigate a range of alternative ways of providing a meals service from the staff restaurant - including the possibility of private catering. This excellent staff facility should not be allowed to decay for lack of an imaginative and cost effective solution to the provision of staff services and prisoner training.

9.22 We received a number of complaints from staff about inadequate parking space around the prison and we noted too that residents of nearby housing had complained about the overspill of staff cars into their parking areas. Given the frustration which lack of parking can cause, we were pleased to note that the minor works programme for 1996-97 included plans to enlarge the external car park.

Comment

9.23 With the unwelcome closure of the staff restaurant, facilities for staff were barely adequate and the refurbishment of an old storage area represented only a marginal improvement on the existing muster room. Given that the inadequacy of staff facilities was raised with us on a number of occasions in relation to muster room overcrowding, lack of seating or provision for drying wet clothing in the locker room, the absence of a smoking policy et al, we believe that the operation of the new muster room should be carefully monitored to determine whether it succeeds in resolving the problems which currently exist and if not, what further remedial action requires to be taken. In tandem, the reopening of the staff restaurant should be a priority.

Staff Perceptions

9.24 During the course of our inspection we met formally with a wide range of staff of all grades, specialisms and levels of experience. Although there was inevitable duplication among the groups, a wide range of issues was raised. We have recorded the views of staff as they were put to us but that should not be taken to imply that the Inspectorate is in full agreement with every point raised. We do feel, however, that it is important that the views and perceptions of staff on aspects of the establishment be recorded. Where issues raised related to aspects of the establishment upon which we have commented on in detail elsewhere in this report, we have cross referenced the relevant paragraphs.

9.25 The recent **suicides in the Institution** were clearly an issue which had deeply affected staff. It was suggested to us that the Institution should have proper suicide cells backed up with a more therapeutic regime. However, one area which was criticised by all was the *ad hoc* arrangements for post-incident support and counselling for staff. Systematic debriefing had reportedly not taken place and we were given personal accounts of continuing distress suffered by members of staff who felt that they had been left to struggle as best they could with the effects of close involvement with the tragic suicides - paragraph 4.27.

9.26 The number of **prisoners on observation** was giving staff cause for concern. The numbers had been increasing quite significantly in recent times and there was a feeling that prisoners were afraid to show their emotions for fear of being put on to SSS. Staff were also concerned that they were not being given enough information as to why prisoners were being placed on observation and with staff shortages and the amount of paperwork to get through, they felt that resources were seriously overstretched - paragraphs 4.21, 5.3 and 6.19.4.

9.27 **Relationships with Management** were perceived as not being very good. One group felt that Management were not able properly to support the staff because they themselves were under-staffed. However, it was also claimed that the number of changes in the senior management team had left staff with feelings of uncertainty and it was clear that not all members of the team enjoyed the support of the Officer grades.

9.28 **Communication** within the Institution was also an area of concern with claims that it had deteriorated at all levels during the previous year and though there were regular staff meetings, the same topics were regularly raised. Discipline Officers claimed that they did not always know in advance about their rosters - paragraphs 9.39-41.

9.29 It was reported that there had been very little **staff training** and that it was only very recently that control and restraint and breathing apparatus training had been re-introduced. We were told that the local training strategy lacked direction though it was acknowledged that staff shortages did make it difficult for courses to be organised. One area which came in for particular criticism was the lack of SVQ assessment and training for recruits - paragraphs 9.11-18.

9.30 **Staff Facilities** came in for some criticism with claims that the new muster room would not be large enough and so many staff would still not use it. Concern was also expressed about what were regarded as poor changing facilities for staff using the gymnasium. The shortage of car parking spaces was also highlighted as being a problem. The main criticism, however, was reserved for the closure of the staff restaurant - paragraphs 9.19-23.

9.31 **The ratio of male/female staff** was discussed and there was a general view that at around 45% of the complement, there were now too many male staff in the Institution to strike the right balance in terms of managing a female population. Difficulties regularly arose in rostering sufficient female staff to undertake tasks which could only be undertaken by them - paragraph 9.10.4.

9.32 The issue of **male YOs coming to the Institution** was also raised. We were told that the staff who had been allocated to work in Bravo Block were becoming increasingly frustrated at the delays and about the lack of information about what was happening. As a result, they had no real sense of ownership of the new challenge and were being used on a very ad hoc basis in the interim - paragraphs 4.28-42.

9.33 The new system of **heated trolleys for prisoners' meals** was also criticised, with staff unhappy about the possibility of accidents as the heavy and unwieldy trolleys were being pushed to the Blocks, particularly in times of bad weather - paragraphs 7.8-13.

Comment

9.34 As will be noted from the above, staff were very critical of a number of areas and we offer the following comments on some of the points raised.

9.35 The suicides in the Institution had clearly had a great effect on all the staff and not just those who had been directly involved at the time. What we received was, in effect, a plea for help from staff who felt isolated and vulnerable. We acknowledge that arrangements were put in hand for post incident counselling, but these were *ad hoc* and short term and clearly some staff were still suffering significant stress.

9.36 Clearly, the number of prisoners on observation was causing the staff some concern. The whole question of medical and other observations was also of concern to us and we have therefore dealt with this matter in some detail in other parts of this report.

9.37 We were not surprised to hear the comments about staff's relationships with senior management as they were similar to comments made to us by staff in other establishments. Cornton Vale's senior management team is no different from any other in the respect that they are being faced with an ever-increasing workload which makes it more difficult to get out and about within the Institution on a daily basis. At Cornton Vale that situation has been exacerbated by the number of changes and vacancies at senior management level thereby further reducing the opportunities to have a visible presence.

9.38 The new staff facility had not opened by the time we finished our inspection, but we were told (and confirmed) that it was only marginally bigger than the existing one. As regards the staff restaurant, we share staff disappointment at its closure - see paragraph 9.21.

Communications

9.39 As part of the strategic planning process, the prison had reviewed its communications procedures with a view to improving the effectiveness of reciprocal communication with a number of main groups - ie staff and families, prisoners and their families, other establishments and HQ, outside agencies, Courts and Visiting Committees and the local community and public at large. There had been a number of problems with existing communications including the absence of a strategy, no system for monitoring the effectiveness of communications and the existence of an extensive and unwieldy meetings structure. Staff shortages and lack of continuity particularly in accommodation Blocks, had also inhibited effective communication and some staff perceived that communication generally had deteriorated over the previous 12 months.

9.40 However, some initiatives to improve communication were already in place by the time of our visit and there was considerable optimism that a rationalisation of existing systems would significantly improve information gathering and dissemination. We noted that prisoners were included on the local communications committee and that communications representatives had been appointed in every function. We were also pleased to see that a new resource centre for staff was being provided in the staff training area.

Comment

9.41 It will be important to establish whether the new initiatives are working well and therefore whether the main target groups feel better informed than is currently the case. We therefore suggest that some form of evaluation is made of the new initiatives and that they are drawn into a comprehensive joint communications strategy and planning document. A periodic local survey of staff and prisoners to test their perception of the effectiveness of the strategy might also prove helpful.

Whitley Committee

9.42 Since the introduction of local Whitley Councils, it has been the practice of the Inspectorate to meet with members of each local Whitley Committee and on this occasion we met with 3 representatives, although the SPOA did not attend. It was acknowledged that separate Unions still retained the right to have a private meeting with the Governor. At the time of our inspection, the Committee were still finding their feet and all the meetings to date, which had been chaired by the Deputy Governor, had concentrated on how Whitley meetings should be run. However, given the range of challenges which were facing Cornton Vale at the time of our visit, we thought that the Whitley Committee should now move away from process and on to the task of examining the issues and exploring ways in which cooperatively to address the problems.

Race Relations

9.43 The Ethnic Minorities Liaison Officer (EMLO) for the Institution was a Residential Supervisor who had been responsible for that function for about 3 years. Although she had received no formal training for the post, she had attended a Home Office National Conference on the issue of race relations and had obtained a qualification through her attendance at a course in England. In an attempt to increase prison awareness of the subject, she had been responsible for instigating a series of meetings at Cornton Vale of EMLOs from other establishments. As a result of those meetings, there was now a good deal more networking taking place to deal with problems which arose and as a direct consequence of that initiative,

a formal contact in SPS HQ for coordinating action in matters regarding race relations had now been established.

9.44 With regard to local arrangements, there was one formal Deputy EMLO but each residential area also had a representative who would deal with any immediate problem which might arise. Over the years there had in fact, been very few admissions from ethnic minority backgrounds but on the occasions when there was one, a locally-produced form containing basic details was completed by the EMLO and a copy sent to the local Race Relations Council. The Institution obtained a great deal of support from outside organisations - for example, the local Police were able to arrange for interpreters and regular visits were made by a representative from the Strathclyde Community Relations Council.

9.45 Foreign language cards giving basic details about the prison process were held in Reception and cultural information sheets for the 6 most common non-Christian religions had been prepared and circulated to staff. Because admissions of such prisoners were few, the Institution did not hold stocks of religious items - eg prayer mats - but arrangements were in place to ensure that these could be obtained at very short notice if required. A local supplier provided halal meat on request and the catering staff were routinely advised of any ethnic minority admissions.

9.46 In addition to holding ethnic minority prisoners, the Institution was occasionally required to hold females awaiting deportation on behalf of the Immigration Service. The last such case had been some 6 months prior to our inspection.

Equal Opportunities

9.47 The EMLO was also the Equal Opportunities Officer (EOO). There was an Equal Opportunities Committee which was chaired by the acting Deputy Governor and whose membership comprised the EMLO/EOO, the Deputy EMLO, the FCDO and a representative from each residential area. Meetings were held on a regular but ad hoc basis.

9.48 An area which was of some concern to the EOO was the number of male staff now working in the Institution. Of the total number of Residential Officers, 40% were male as were 50% of Operations Officers. Because of the requirement to have female staff carry out certain tasks in relation to female prisoners, some problems were being encountered in relation to rostering. A recent intake of 18 new staff had been made up of 17 males and one female. Concerns over this gradual shift in balance had been brought to the attention of senior management and SPS HQ (see also paragraph 9.10.4).

9.49 One of the physical problems within the Institution was that the visits room, which was upstairs in the Administration Block, was not suitable for disabled visitors and consequently, such visits had to take place in the closed visits area. One proposal being considered to help address the problem, was to convert the toilets in the downstairs area into an extended visitors' waiting area which would then include a toilet for the disabled and baby changing facilities. (There was already a baby changing facility in the actual visits room and prisoners had access to it but only in the presence of a member of staff.) Consideration was also being given to the provision of a ramp for wheelchairs from the car park.

9.50 Toilet and shower facilities for staff were widely available throughout the Institution.

10. PRISONERS

Prisoner Perceptions

10.1 During the course of our inspection we met with a large number of prisoners, both informally and formally in groups, who comprised a cross-section of the whole population. As is our practice, we have recorded their views as they were put to us. This should not be taken to imply that the Inspectorate is in full agreement with every point raised, but where this report covers any of their comments in more detail, the relevant paragraph numbers are recorded.

10.2 The **regime** came in for considerable criticism, with the generally held view being that it was extremely boring with very little to do particularly during the recreation periods. The progression system was perceived as being non-existent, there were very few work opportunities, access to education had been cut back and individuals were being locked up for lengthy periods - Chapter 6.

10.3 There was a unanimous view that the female prisoners were losing out as a result of the decision to move **male YOs into the Institution**. It was perceived that resources were being channelled into an upgrading of Bravo Block at the expense of the female prisoners. They were also unhappy that some of their limited work opportunities were being made available to the males. One particular source of complaint was the fact that the male Block would have 2 card telephones - the female Blocks had one each - paragraphs 4.28-42.

10.4 One of the recurring themes to emerge from all these discussions was the general view that Cornton Vale was not as good as it used to be as there were far too many petty rules and it was felt that **relationships with staff** had deteriorated with many staff now too busy to talk to prisoners. It was claimed that too many of the staff were not used to dealing with LTPs and there had been a loss of the informality which used to be an integral part of life in the Institution. There was a generally held view that the prisoners preferred dealing with the male staff whom, they claimed, were more approachable. On the positive side, there was praise for the way in which the staff had reacted following the recent suicides, both in trying

to save the lives of the prisoners concerned and in helping the other prisoners in the immediate aftermath.

10.5 **Visits** were another source of complaint. Prisoners did not like the small tables which had been introduced and felt that visits now lacked privacy because the room was so crowded. Staff were alleged to be over-zealous in their supervision and it was claimed that they would terminate a visit on the merest suspicion that some illicit substance was being passed. Prisoners were also unhappy about the fact that the snack food and drinks vending machines frequently did not work - paragraphs 6.119-124.

10.6 As regards **the general appearance of the Institution**, it was felt that it would benefit from a good cleaning and that the sitting rooms should have some posters and pot plants to brighten them up - paragraphs 3.6-11.

10.7 On the question of **food**, there was a general view that the introduction of the trolleys had resulted in the meals being hotter at the point of delivery. However, prisoners were not happy about having to carry their meals on plates back to their dining areas. The LTPs were very disappointed about the decision to end the Homemaker scheme - paragraphs 7.1-19.

10.8 The question of **drugs** in the Institution was also raised and there was criticism of the help available for those who did want to come off and it was claimed that the ASU was not normally available to Remands. It was suggested that the ASU should also be available for those nearing the end of their sentence - paragraphs 4.1-19 and 6.86-91.

10.9 Prisoners were also critical of the fact that they rarely got the opportunity to see a member of the Management team. They also had little confidence in the Grievance Procedure (paragraph 5.9) because of the delays in getting replies and in the Sentence Planning system (paragraphs 6.71-75) where it was claimed that critical reports were being written by staff who did not really know the prisoners concerned.

Comment

10.10 Overall, we had sympathy with some of the views expressed by the prisoners.

10.11 We shared the concern about the lack of regime opportunities and at paragraphs 4.28-42 we have expressed our reservations as to whether the Institution is presently ready to cope with the introduction of male YOs.

10.12 Visit facilities were certainly cramped but we understand that attempts were being made to relieve that pressure by the future introduction of additional sessions (paragraph 6.123). As regards food, we also criticise the trolley system and the decision to remove the Homemaker scheme which we believe should, if properly managed, be part of the local progression system (paragraphs 7.1-19).

10.13 We shared the prisoners views that the Institution could do with some brightening up and their idea about plants and posters in the recreation would seem to be a good place to start.

11. ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER SERVICES

General Office

11.1 Staffing in the administration function comprised an Administration Manager (whose duties also included provision of relief cover for all other office posts and the role of Budget Centre Liaison Officer), 2 members of staff covering the criminal and general administration desks, a telephonist/clerk, the Governor's personal secretary, a typist in the social work department, 3 stores staff and one vacancy for a typist/clerk. The manager had also made a request that his staff complement be reviewed in the light of SPIN and FAM implementation in the office. The latter computerised financial management software had reportedly had the effect of significantly slowing financial transactions and some areas of software unreliability had meant that a certain amount of paperwork was still being run in tandem. We noted that manual calculation of release dates on all consecutive and part concurrent warrants was still taking place - also because of continuing software problems.

11.2 The main problems in staffing terms, however, were the lack of trained relief for the criminal and general admin. desks and the absence of a trained operative with appropriate permissions, to operate the FAM system. This was placing considerable pressure on the remaining members of staff who were providing as comprehensive a service as possible under the circumstances. The situation was exacerbated by the heavy workload resulting from processing orders for pharmacy and catering requisites.

11.3 At the time of our inspection, the general office was in a state of considerable disarray as the stores had been decanted in part to enable the provision of a new staff muster facility. This had resulted in stores items filling the office and administration staff being crowded together until all the changes had taken place.

11.4 On the broader issue of storage space, the manager expressed his concern about the lack of suitable secure and spacious provision for his stores. We were inclined to agree that the effect on the administration function of the recent changes in use of some accommodation

was particularly detrimental and might have been ameliorated to some extent by appropriate consultation.

Comment

11.5 We were satisfied that systems for the proper handling of warrants, prisoners' mail, parole documentation, prisoners' earnings, financial transactions and prisoners' valuable property were in place and operating effectively. We did, however, share the administration manager's concern about the effect on timeous completion of work when key staff were absent, and about the undue pressure placed on the team by the absence of a trained relief.

11.6 Despite the difficulties, and for the most part because the staff in key positions in the office had previously been either Principal or Chief Clerk Officers with many years experience, the office appeared to be providing a good service. There were clearly difficulties in relation to space for stores, continuing problems with the slow operation of the FAM system which was impacting on the efficiency of other parts of the administration function, and the need for trained relief staff. The administration manager had addressed these issues and others in a full review of the prison's administration and canteen functions which had been presented to senior management in October 1995. No decision about the review's recommendations had been made at the time of our visit and this was an obstacle to resolving some of the outstanding problems. We would therefore urge that the administration manager's report should be considered and decisions made as soon as is practicable.

Stores

11.7 At the time of our inspection, major changes were in the process of taking place with regard to the stores and consequently some temporary arrangements had been put in place.

11.8 Previously, the stores had been located on 2 floors in a building close to the vehicle entrance to the Institution. However, the upstairs part of that area was in the process of being converted into a new staff facility and work was ongoing to create a single stores area on the

ground floor. While this work was going on, expense store items were being held in 2 large walk-in metal containers. However, these containers were not suited for that purpose with the result that items were being stored in rather a haphazard manner and it was difficult to gain access to them. None of these arrangements was in any way satisfactory but we were assured that the new permanent store would be in operation shortly after our inspection.

11.9 The entire stores operation was managed by 3 members of staff and all procedures appeared to be in accordance with SPS guidelines. The staff did, however, express some concern about the new arrangements and in particular, about how they were expected to store items which normally filled 2 floors, into one. They were, therefore, working on developing a system of keeping tight control over what items were being ordered from Central Stores and ensuring that items ordered by the residential Blocks were delivered as soon as possible in order to prevent long storage periods. We had some sympathy with regard to the storage problems and clearly this is a matter which management will have to keep under review.

11.10 We were disappointed to find that the longstanding problem of Central Store's failure to give advance warning of 'stock outs' was still persisting and that as a result, the establishment had no indication whether stores which they had ordered were available until the delivery van arrived. We have highlighted this problem in a number of previous inspection reports and urge that remedial action is taken as soon as possible.

11.11 The establishment was also encountering significant problems in obtaining uniform items for staff - this was again a longstanding problem and we urge that this basic service should be sorted out as a matter of urgency.

SPIN

11.12 The SPIN coordinator had been full-time on that duty for about a year at the time of our inspection; Cornton Vale had gone 'live' in October 1995.

11.13 Originally there had been an implementation team comprising 5 members but under the new staffing structure, the other members had all been allocated new duties which had left

no time for them to concentrate on SPIN matters. The task of planning and overseeing the installation of the system had, therefore, been left to the coordinator.

11.14 At present, there were 24 terminals throughout the Institution but that was not regarded as sufficient for the establishment's needs and a bid for additional equipment was currently being considered by SPS HQ. Fortunately, when the original cabling had been done, a number of additional lines had been installed so most areas were now ready to accept any new terminals provided.

11.15 The training of staff in the operation of the system was undertaken by the coordinator but he had been encountering problems in having staff released from their duties to attend. Gradually, however, those problems were being overcome and the number of staff who had been through the process was increasing all the time. All staff in the Residential function now had access. The overall shortage of computers was however, hindering the training process - for example, on a recent session, 6 staff were sharing one computer. The bid for extra equipment included a proposal to have computers in the new Staff Training Resource Centre so that training exercises could be set up.

11.16 The coordinator held monthly forums for which there was an open invitation to staff to come along and discuss any problems which they might be experiencing with the system. With the exception of the need for additional equipment, the most common complaint was that staff found the FAM process to be very slow.

Records and Journals

11.17 The books which recorded requests by prisoners to see members of the Visiting Committee (VC) did not invariably indicate when a prisoner was actually seen and by whom. We could not therefore be sure that all prisoners who formally requested access to a VC member, were actually able to do so.

11.18 In relation to the books which contained comments and queries entered by VC members after each of their visits to the prison, we could find no indication that any member

of the management team was regularly reviewing the journal and addressing the matters raised by the members. We therefore suggest a review of both the procedure by which prisoners formally access the VC and the system for responding to issues identified by VC members in their visits journal.

11.19 In relation to routine request books held in each of the accommodation Blocks, all negative decisions ought to be accompanied by clear and detailed reasons for refusal. This is on the basis that all staff can then be clear about Block policy and background information is also readily available should the refusal become the basis of a grievance.

11.20 We were satisfied that the Governor's Order Book and other formal staff notices were kept up to date and readily accessible. Incident reports were timeously completed and comprehensive; however, the punishment register and accompanying paper work were not being completed satisfactorily (see paragraph 5.6).

Alcoholics Anonymous

11.21 Representatives from an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) group based in Glasgow visited the Institution every week when an average of 20 prisoners attended meetings held in the Chapel. Sponsors attended on a rota basis, normally about once every 6 weeks, and each meeting would include 2 sponsors and 2 invited speakers.

11.22 AA had been involved with the Institution since it had first opened and they enjoyed excellent relationships with staff and management. The Institution provided tea for the meetings and the AA representatives had been given permission to bring in cigarettes. In addition to the group meetings, one-to-one counselling could be provided on request but we were advised that this was a very rare occurrence. Representatives from the organisation would, if requested, also meet prisoners on release and arrange to pass them over to local groups as part of a throughcare project.

Community Liaison

11.23 A community liaison officer had been appointed to oversee external communications. She supervised events such as open days - of which there had been 2 in the last year. She was also responsible for organising and escorting visitors around the prison - including groups of Justices of the Peace, who visited on a fairly regular basis. The Institution also provided a number of staff members to speak to a variety of external organisations. Local pensioners were also able to enjoy the use of VT hairdressing facilities.

Comment

11.24 We were pleased with these arrangements as far as they went. Nevertheless we thought that they were limited, even making allowance for staff shortages. Much more proactivity for the Institution's external image was required with appropriate organisations and groups in the areas from which the prisoners came. In view of the very negative images which had been building up as the result of recent suicides, this is something which the Governor may wish to take forward personally - perhaps with the help of the VCs, who have expressed a willingness to be more actively involved.

Butler Trust

11.25 Responsibility for administration of the Scheme rested with the Operations Manager and in an attempt to maintain a level of interest, he had arranged for the Trust's posters to be put on display in the various accommodation Blocks as well as in the central Administration area. In addition, he was awaiting delivery of a supply of leaflets from the Trust for inclusion with staff pay slips.

11.26 Nominations were scrutinised by the coordinator and then referred to the senior management team for final consideration at their regular meetings before being submitted formally to the Trust. In recent years, Cornton Vale has had a steady stream of nominations, (many of which have been submitted by prisoners), resulting in the award of certificates to the staff concerned.

12. VISITING COMMITTEES

Visiting Committee (Young Offenders)

12.1 We met with the Chair and several members of the YOs VC whose structure differed from that of the adult VC. Appointments were the responsibility of the Secretary of State and the Committee, which currently numbered 8, consisted of some very experienced and committed members. Regular contact was being made with the Institution and there was good communication with the Governor. Its members expressed concern and frustration nevertheless that they should be used far more by Management and staff - especially in helping with the development of more positive external relations. They also observed that there was little or no liaison between them and the adult VC.

12.2 The following general observations were offered by the VC:

12.2.1 They were pleased with the establishment of the ASU.

12.2.2 The arrival of heated food trolleys was very welcome.

12.2.3 The reduced size of the prison management team was a matter of concern. Staff were helpful, but morale had been deteriorating, especially since the closure of the staff restaurant. The general perception was that management and staff were only just coping on a daily basis.

12.2.4 There was a growing undercurrent of bullying in the establishment, which it was thought might be linked to drugs.

12.2.5 Levels of boredom among prisoners were high, especially at the weekends.

12.2.6 There were concerns about the induction process and aspects of the Regime in Romeo Block.

12.2.7 Education facilities were judged to be poor.

12.3 Initially, the Committee had not been keen for male YOs to come to Cornton Vale. They were now concerned about the vacuum which was being created by the delay in their arrival. Above all, however, the VC were concerned by the changed nature of many of the young women who were now arriving at the Institution. Drug abuse and problems associated with drugs were greatly contributing to a poorer state of health and morale amongst remand and convicted prisoners. In their view, hospital or a psychiatric setting were more appropriate locations for housing some prisoners whom they described as 'pathetic and bedraggled' individuals. They observed that most of the prisoners they met suffered from very low self esteem.

Visiting Committee (Adults)

12.4 Following its reconstitution under the Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions (Scotland) Rules 1994, the VC had recently been reduced in size from 29 to 15. Members were concerned that this change had disadvantaged a number of prisoners, as not all Council areas were now being represented, and had accordingly expressed regret to their Association, observing that there had been a failure to consult with them on the new arrangements.

12.5 We noted that whatever its constitution, the Committee appeared to be a very active one, with at least 4 or 5 members visiting the prison by rota each month. Some had undertaken visits to other penal establishments, 6 new members had undergone internal training and the VC had been in communication with various MPs, the Chief Executive of the SPS and the Area Director, to mention but a few. Relations with the Governor were described as good.

12.6 The VC offered the following observations:

12.6.1 They welcomed the opening of Heathervale House at Polmont.

12.6.2 The arrival of heated food trolleys was a welcome and much needed innovation.

12.6.3 The VT hairdressing unit was a great asset to the local elderly.

12.6.4 There were now too many male officers at Cornton Vale although they were supportive of equal opportunity concepts.

12.6.5 The recent closure of the staff restaurant was detrimentally affecting staff morale.

12.6.6 There was insufficient work for prisoners.

12.6.7 Facilities for prisoners at weekends were virtually non existent.

12.6.8 The provision of education for prisoners was woefully inadequate.

12.6.9 They were extremely worried about Remand prisoners and the increasing rate at which prisoners were having to double up in cells following the closure of Bravo Block.

12.6.10 They continued to have reservations about the transfer of male YOs to Cornton Vale.

12.6.11 Recent media coverage had been negative, partly due to discussion of the drug issue following the introduction of random MDT, but mainly because of the suicides and FAIs. They also expressed frustration about not being utilised by Management and staff to help develop much more positive external relationships.

13. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

13.1 At first sight the physical layout of HM Institution Cornton Vale gives an impression of openness, modernity and order, which might be more in keeping with a University campus than the austere conditions which are normally associated with a prison. Nevertheless, given the nature of its occupants, many of whom present little or no danger to the public, these outward conditions are probably more than appropriate.

13.2 Closer inspection behind the reassuring facade reveals a much more bleak situation. Over the last few years the number of drug damaged and drug abusing women (mostly from the West of Scotland), had gradually been increasing with the Remand Block and Health Centre being particularly affected. This situation has been exacerbated latterly by a spate of tragic suicides, which has in turn provoked closer focus on the many other problems which are affecting prisoners and staff.

13.3 Separately, over much the same period and in common with all other SPS establishments, there had been a radical organisational review at Cornton Vale along with the introduction of computerised prisoner records. A range of other local initiatives included the commissioning of Heathervale House, the ASU and Induction Units and a reorganisation of nursing services - all of which are known to have placed a massive extra burden on the comparatively small management team and on staff.

13.4 As well as all these changes, management and staff have also had to cope with the planning work which was connected with preparing to receive male YOs into the prison's Bravo Block. This had had the effect not only of arresting the development of the regime for female prisoners by diverting attention and resources, but had also led to a staff dispute. At the time of our inspection, that dispute had not yet been resolved and female prisoners were meanwhile becoming increasingly anxious about the effects which the arrival of these young men might have on their conditions. The combination of such a range of difficulties for a comparatively small establishment, had become overwhelming.

13.5 That said, the quality of staff throughout the establishment encouraged us greatly, though just under 20% were new recruits and therefore relatively inexperienced. Staff were enthusiastic, dedicated and helpful and we thought that relationships with prisoners were reasonable. We thought that staff morale was much better than expected given the considerable stress that had been engendered by the recent suicides; nevertheless, there was an understandable level of anxiety just below the surface, which will need careful monitoring. Staff morale would be greatly lifted if the staff restaurant were to be re-opened soon.

13.6 We were also impressed by the Supervisors who seemed well aware of many of the issues which were affecting the establishment. We are in no doubt that Management is fortunate to have such a dedicated group available to help take the Institution forward: nevertheless these individuals will need appropriate training to enhance their effectiveness. Generally, we were worried by the lack of recent training opportunities for staff throughout this establishment.

13.7 Nevertheless, we assessed that Management and staff were struggling to meet the daily requirements of the establishment and with a few exceptions, not much was actually being achieved in progressing either the establishment or the lives of its prisoners. We assess that HM Institution Cornton Vale is currently lacking some of the basic conditions and opportunities which are readily available elsewhere in the majority of SPS establishments. As we commented last year, the establishment still seems to be stuck in something of a time warp which means that it is achieving little by way of helping to prepare prisoners for release.

13.8 The introduction of male YOs arose as a consequence of some of the recommendations made in the Inspectorate's earlier Thematic Study into 'The Custody and Training of Female Prisoners and Young Offenders in Scotland'. When the proposed transfer of the male YOs was originally planned by SPS HQ it was acknowledged by the Inspectorate that though not ideal, it would nevertheless help serve the wider needs of the SPS in reducing chronic overcrowding. Since then, however, a number of considerations relevant to the initial decision have changed - especially in regard to the scale of drug related problems in the prison and the tragic spate of attempted and actual suicides. The question of introducing male prisoners has thus become more complicated and has led us to the conclusion that the

establishment is not for the time being ready to take on male YO's, as their arrival will only further reduce the already limited opportunities for the existing population. On the eventual recommissioning of Bravo Block, however, we strongly urge that the arrival of its new population is thoroughly planned and carefully phased.

13.9 We had some concerns about security. These were raised separately with SPS HQ and the Governor and subsequently it has been indicated to us that these will shortly be addressed as part of an ongoing SPS wide security review.

13.10 We were greatly disappointed by the amount and range of work available to female prisoners which was almost wholly inadequate and inappropriate and should be given the greatest priority for review. However, the opportunities for work at the new Heathervale House at Polmont represented a good beginning - albeit that the work was in a very traditional female mode. These particular opportunities can, however, only ever apply to a maximum of 16 individuals.

13.11 We were also concerned by the lack of comprehensive education facilities, structured offending behaviour programmes and cohesive pre-release arrangements. Those which did exist were found to be flimsy, lacking in focus and without proper evaluation. This, taken in conjunction with the shortage of quality of work opportunities brought us to the conclusion that the Institution was fulfilling its basic requirements for custody but little else. The physical, social and spiritual needs of prisoners were being met - but again in a limited fashion.

13.12 Heated food trolleys were helping to produce hotter food at the point of delivery, which demonstrated a much needed improvement since our last inspection. We were, however, extremely disappointed that prisoners were no longer able to make meals in their accommodation blocks. The restoration of this opportunity would be a considerable morale boost for prisoners who are so frequently beset with boredom (especially at the weekends) and also a beneficial addition to a limited regime.

13.13 We were impressed with some of the healthcare functions and Specialists, but this service was only just managing to cope, despite the attention of a professional and enthusiastic nursing staff. The early provision of a dedicated Medical Officer 'team leader', coupled with a range of relatively inexpensive adjustments to the healthcare strategy, could soon provide the proactive and therapeutic service that is so desperately needed to underpin the prison's regime.

13.14 An Addiction Support Unit had been established since our last inspection: this, in conjunction with MDT was helping to make a modest, but nevertheless welcome impact on the problems of illegal drug abuse. In view of the increasing number of drug damaged women who are arriving at the Institution, we hope that priority will be given to finding an additional addictions worker to work exclusively with Remand prisoners. The establishment of drug free areas in the prison should also be a priority, and we are anxious that the general anti-drug abuse strategy in the Institution should be addressed in a much more coordinated and multi-disciplinary fashion.

13.15 Indeed, the Institution most needs a much more coordinated approach throughout, particularly at managerial level. A number of careful adjustments, rather than expensive resources is required to place Cornton Vale on a more focused and effective course. Appropriate shifts of emphasis, as for example have been suggested for the Health Centre, could quickly produce the necessary changes if replicated across all departments.

13.16 The Governor was a popular and well respected individual, but at the time of inspection was being hampered by the absence of a Deputy and a lack of appropriate experience in his management team, which in any case, was marginally too small for its growing and increasingly onerous task.

13.17 More strategic focus is required in relation to throughcare and links with appropriate groups and organisations in the community throughout Scotland. In addition to further efforts which need to be made by the Governor and his team, a separate examination of the trends in female offending and the needs of female prisoners should be instigated. The study should seek to determine such fundamental issues as whether there is a need for a pilot bail

hostel for Remands in Glasgow and whether there would be scope for further development of diversionary schemes for female offenders. The thrust of this examination should be to seek to reduce the number of inadequate women being sent to Cornton Vale in the first place, in order that its staff can better deal with the remaining population and thereby properly address the endless cycle of recidivism in which so many female offenders are being trapped.

13.18 A list of recommendations and points of note are attached, many of which were brought to the attention of Chief Executive, Area Director and Governor at a very early stage in the compilation of this report. We have also written to the Governor on a number of minor issues raised in the report.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 For levels above SPS HQ

14.1.1 There should be an investigation into the provision of appropriate Bail Hostel accommodation, with priority given to female remands from the Greater Glasgow area, in order to reduce the numbers placed at risk in closed conditions (paragraph 4.25.1).

14.1.2 Psychiatric screening should be provided in some Courts - for example in Greater Glasgow. A Community Psychiatric Nurse, who could undertake the early screening of vulnerable and disturbed individuals and be in touch with the Douglas Inch Clinic and other relevant specialists, could make a considerable difference in anticipating and diverting serious problems which might not be otherwise identified until after admission (paragraph 4.25.2).

14.2. For SPS HQ/Area Director

14.2.1 There should be commissioned research into the scale and nature of drug abuse at Cornton Vale (paragraph 4.17.1).

14.2.2 The provision of in cell television for female Remand prisoners should be instituted (paragraph 4.25.3).

14.2.3 There should be an urgent review of the timing of the transfer of male YOs to Cornton Vale (paragraph 4.42).

14.2.4 A revitalisation of the work opportunities at Cornton Vale should be given as high a priority as possible in the Review of Industries which is being conducted by the SPS (paragraph 6.96).

14.2.5 A community psychiatric nurse post should be established with the individual concerned working with vulnerable prisoners in Cornton Vale and in the community (paragraph 8.21).

14.3 For Area Director and Governor

14.3.1 The Institution's contacts with appropriate supporting agencies in the community should be re-examined with a view greatly to strengthening throughcare drugs links, particularly in the Greater Glasgow area (paragraph 4.17.2).

14.3.2 The Institution's anti-drugs strategy should be reviewed with a view to establishing a clear policy with the aim of having greater co-ordination and a truly multi-disciplinary approach throughout the establishment with better cross functional communication (paragraph 4.17.3).

14.3.3 A further trained addictions worker should be recruited and given the priority task of focusing primarily on Remand prisoners (paragraph 4.17.4).

14.3.4 A pilot scheme involving a number of the recommendations contained in the recent reports on suicide prevention by Professor John Gunn and Dr Kevin Power should be introduced soon - particularly those relating to the integration of those known to be potentially suicidal (paragraph 4.25.4).

14.3.5 Remand prisoners should be provided with a much more therapeutic regime, especially around the weekend (paragraphs 4.25.5 and 6.19).

14.3.6 Special arrangements for the induction of Remand prisoners should be made (paragraph 4.25.6).

14.3.7 The timing of the delivery of prisoners to Cornton Vale should be reviewed in conjunction with the Police (paragraph 4.25.7).

14.3.8 Wherever possible, a nurse who has psychiatric qualifications or suicide awareness training should be on duty in Reception for screening (paragraph 4.25.8).

14.3.9 The Institution's anti-bullying strategies should be properly implemented, monitored and evaluated, particularly in relation to the Remand Block (paragraph 4.25.9).

14.3.10 All Remand prisoners should be allocated a properly trained Personal Officer (paragraph 4.25.10).

14.3.11 Remand prisoners should have greater access to telephones and in a place which affords greater privacy (paragraph 4.25.11).

14.3.12 Local arrangements for post-suicide counselling for staff and prisoners should be reviewed and standardised (paragraph 4.27).

14.3.13 An additional Officer should be permanently added to each shift in the Remand Block (paragraph 5.4).

14.3.14 The Homemaker scheme should be re-introduced on the lines suggested (paragraph 7.17).

14.3.15 Consideration should be given to the introduction of some form of separate provision of pharmacy services (paragraph 8.18).

14.3.16 The number of psychiatrists' sessions should be increased from 4 to 6 (paragraph 8.20).

14.3.17 A medical team leader with wide experience of dealing with drug abusers should be appointed (paragraph 8.39).

14.3.18 The ground floor of the Health Centre should be made entirely available for health care provision (paragraph 8.45).

15. POINTS OF NOTE

15.1 Issues to be considered by SPS HQ

15.1.1 An independent procedure for the inspection of the quality of teaching and standard of education service delivery should be established (paragraph 6.105).

15.1.2 Remedial action should be taken soon to resolve the problems associated with the laundry at Cornton Vale (paragraph 7.48).

15.1.3 Remedial action should be taken as soon as possible to resolve the problem of Central Store's failure to give advance warning of 'stock outs' (paragraph 11.10).

15.1.4 Problems encountered by establishments in receiving items of uniform should be sorted out as a matter of urgency (paragraph 11.11).

15.2. Issues to be taken up with the Governor on subsequent visits by the Inspectorate.

15.2.1 A number of accommodation issues, as listed, needs to be addressed (paragraph 3.11).

15.2.2 A number of measures, as listed, should be introduced to improve the operation of the Addiction Support Unit (paragraph 4.18).

15.2.3 Access to local Samaritans and other women's groups should be greatly improved, including consideration of a dedicated line for access to the Samaritans (paragraph 4.26.1).

15.2.4 The number of prison visitors should be increased (paragraph 4.26.2).

15.2.5 There should be a systematic and comprehensive process to analyse lessons learned after any serious incident of self harm (paragraph 4.26.3).

15.2.6 Training and supervision should be given to those Officers responsible for recording statements and details as part of the Orderly Room process (paragraph 5.6).

15.2.7 Every effort should be made to allow prisoners located in the separate cells a period of daily outdoor exercise (paragraph 5.7).

15.2.8 The separate cells area should not be used for housing prisoners on observation status other than in the most exceptional circumstances (paragraph 5.8).

15.2.9 In regard to the completion of weekly staffing returns, there should be a comprehensive review of manpower returns, the implementation of effective monitoring at management level and a review of the training needs of Supervisors (paragraph 5.22).

15.2.10 The practice of using untrained probationary staff to be in charge of escorts should stop (paragraph 5.23).

15.2.11 All admissions to the Remand Block should at an early stage, automatically be interviewed by a prison social worker (paragraph 6.17).

15.2.12 Individual care plans should be developed for the most vulnerable in the Remand population coupled with the introduction of properly structured domestic meetings for Discipline Officers who work in that Block (paragraph 6.18).

15.2.13 The practice of male staff undertaking regular observation of women prisoners at night and during patrol periods should be reviewed (paragraph 6.20).

15.2.14 The operation of the Induction Unit should be the subject of early review with monitoring and evaluation systems introduced and staff provided with appropriate training (paragraph 6.27).

15.2.15 If the Induction Unit is to be used to begin the formal assessment procedures for LTPs, systems will have to be introduced for so doing (paragraph 6.28).

15.2.16 Recreation opportunities for all convicted prisoners should be revitalised (paragraph 6.40).

15.2.17 Out of Block commitments for staff in Yankee should be reviewed to enable staff to concentrate more on individual prisoners and on the development of the regime (paragraph 6.41).

15.2.18 Regular multi-disciplinary case meetings should be undertaken in Yankee Block to facilitate discussion of difficult management problems (paragraph 6.42).

15.2.19 The immediate post admission induction into Yankee Block should be reviewed with a view to enabling staff to spend more time with each individual (paragraph 6.42).

15.2.20 The differences between the first and second stages in the progression system in Papa Block should be reconsidered with a view to providing realistic incentives to progress (paragraph 6.55).

15.2.21 The selection process for Heathervale House should be reviewed (paragraph 6.66).

15.2.22 Pre-release programmes and individual throughcare plans should be introduced for prisoners in Heathervale House (paragraph 6.67).

15.2.23 Cornton Vale should continue to provide educational input as required into Heathervale House (paragraph 6.67).

15.2.24 The policy of not allowing families into Heathervale House should be reviewed, at least in respect of access by children to their mothers (paragraph 6.67).

15.2.25 Full-time staff in Heathervale House should receive training in group work and counselling skills and relief staff should receive training commensurate with their full-time counterparts (paragraph 6.68).

15.2.26 Efforts should be made to expand the range of work opportunities for prisoners in Heathervale House and a detailed information pamphlet should be prepared for employers of placements from there to complement the verbal briefing delivered by staff (paragraph 6.69).

15.2.27 Sentence Planning at Cornton Vale requires a thorough and radical review (paragraph 6.75).

15.2.28 The lack of relevant offending behaviour programmes requires the urgent attention of the Governor and his senior management team (paragraph 6.78).

15.2.29 In order to maximise its potential, a number of steps - as listed - require to be taken with regard to the programme of cognitive skills training (paragraph 6.84).

15.2.30 The programme and regime in the ASU should not be interrupted either by the staff being required to undertake other duties or by staffing levels being reduced as a result of staff shortages in other areas (paragraph 6.89).

15.2.31 The ASU's programme needs to be subject to ongoing evaluation (paragraph 6.89).

15.2.32 A set of protocols should be developed which define an agreed response to issues which arise during the ASU programme (paragraph 6.90).

15.2.33 The matter of attendance at education classes requires urgent review (paragraph 6.102).

15.2.34 A local Working Group should be set up to review the current provision and operation of the education unit with a view to maximising prisoner participation and offering classes which are relevant, particularly in relation to the needs of illiterate and semi-literate prisoners. As an interim measure, consideration should be given to the involvement of volunteer adult literacy tutors (paragraph 6.105).

15.2.35 The education manager should routinely be involved in assessing prisoners educationally and in ongoing prisoner management, should have regular access to a senior management forum to assist in regime planning and development and sentence planning and should be provided with a SPIN terminal (paragraph 6.106).

15.2.36 Consideration should be given to providing a talking books section in the library for those prisoners with literacy problems (paragraph 6.107).

15.2.37 The library should be open at weekends for those prisoners who are unable to attend during the day and should extend its sphere of operation into the accommodation areas and provide a readily accessible stock of paperbacks and magazines (paragraphs 6.108-109).

15.2.38 The gymnasium changing area used by male staff should be upgraded to bring it up to par with the female facility (paragraph 6.112).

15.2.39 There should be early implementation of the local review of visits arrangements (paragraph 6.123).

15.2.40 There should be an improvement in terms of both quality and quantity of standard visit provision and the potential for much wider access by all prisoners to bonding and family visits should be examined (paragraph 6.124).

15.2.41 The visit liaison officers in the Blocks should be provided with a description of their duties and responsibilities, appropriate training to undertake the job effectively and sufficient time set aside within their normal duties to deal with visitors (paragraph 6.128).

15.2.42 The role of the FCDO requires to be defined and time and resources clearly set aside to allow development to take place (paragraph 6.131).

15.2.43 The Lifer Liaison Officer should be given the opportunity to undertake proper training consistent with the role and should have sound interviewing and counselling skills (paragraph 6.134).

15.2.44 The Governor should review the current proposals for food handling training to determine whether any steps can be taken to speed up the process (paragraph 7.3).

15.2.45 Consideration should be given to the alternative proposal suggested for transporting food to the accommodation Blocks (paragraph 7.13).

15.2.46 Urgent discussions should be held between senior management and the social work unit with a view to setting out clear guidelines as to how information regarding vulnerable prisoners can be exchanged (paragraph 7.28).

15.2.47 Management should take the appropriate steps to ensure that all relevant staff are properly and regularly trained in the use of the new breathing apparatus (paragraph 7.56).

15.2.48 A proper consulting room should be provided for the genito-urinary specialist and the family planning consultant (paragraph 8.7).

15.2.49 Separate changing facilities should be provided for the nursing staff (paragraph 8.8).

15.2.50 The protocols for managing prisoners with addiction problems should be re-examined (paragraph 8.16).

15.2.51 A second nurse should be trained as a back-up counsellor to assist the genito-urinary specialist (paragraph 8.24).

15.2.52 There should be a vaccination programme against Hepatitis B (paragraph 8.26).

15.2.53 A second nurse should be trained as a back-up to assist the family planning consultant (paragraph 8.28).

15.2.54 Prisoners should be interviewed by the family planning nurse prior to release and contraceptive arrangements made where appropriate (paragraph 8.28).

15.2.55 Nurses with specialist training should be used to develop a proactive programme of health promotion (paragraph 8.31).

15.2.56 There should be psychology input into the ASU and induction and assessment processes (paragraph 8.37).

15.2.57 The number of psychology sessions should be increased (paragraph 8.38).

15.2.58 Cryotherapy equipment should be purchased for the genito-urinary specialist (paragraph 8.43).

15.2.59 The senior management team require a period of respite in order to develop their initiatives and to plan for and implement the required regime changes (paragraph 9.8).

15.2.60 Management should address the issue of the shortfall in staff training to ensure that adequate training is made available to all staff (paragraph 9.18).

15.2.61 Management should vigorously investigate a range of alternative ways of providing a meals service from the staff restaurant - including the possibility of private catering (paragraph 9.21).

15.2.62 The new communications initiatives should be evaluated and they should be drawn into a joint communications strategy and planning document (paragraph 9.41).

15.2.63 There should be a review of both the procedure by which prisoners formally access the VC and the system for responding to issues identified by VC members in their visits journal (paragraph 11.18).

15.2.64 The Governor, perhaps with the help of the VCs, should consider introducing a more proactive approach to improve the Institution's external image (paragraph 11.24).

EXTRACTS FROM THE STRATEGIC PLAN
ONGOING KEY INITIATIVES 1995-96

Year	Objective/Task	Performance Measure	Target
Good Order			
Ongoing	3. To create a safe environment	a) The number of significant incidents b) The number of serious assaults on staff c) The number of serious assaults on prisoners	a) Will not exceed 2 b) Will not exceed 2 c) Will not exceed 5
	4. To be fair and open in the management of prisoners	a) Fairness of Orderly Room Procedures b) Effectiveness of the Request and Complaints Procedure	a) There will be no complaints regarding the procedures followed b) There are no applications for judicial review of conduct of the Orderly Room. a) The percentage of requests or complaints answered within published timescales will be not less than 90% b) The percentage of requests or complaints dealt with by the Internal Complaints Committee will not exceed 5%.

Year	Objective/Task	Performance Measure	Target
Good Order			
Ongoing	5. Setting of Uniform Standards throughout establishment in presentation and approach to prisoners, visitors and public in general.	<p>a) Staff in direct contact with prisoners, visitors and public will be dressed to, and approach them in, the standards set by local orders.</p> <p>b) Involvement of group of staff/prisoners /visitors in achieving objective/task.</p>	<p>a) To devise and publish local orders re presentation and approach by June 1996.</p> <p>b) 50 staff will be trained in communication skills by October 1996 to provide a professional approach to all with whom they are in contact.</p> <p>a) Establish a consultative group of staff/prisoners/visitors by May 1996 to assist us in the maintenance and development of standards and style of visits and facilities available.</p> <p>b) 95% of all visitors complaints received will be answered within 7 days of receipt.</p>
		c) Types of Reports at the Orderly Room	<p>a) Devise system to record types of offences presented in the Orderly Room by April 1996.</p> <p>b) Produce an analysis of the 5 most common types of Reports in October 1996.</p> <p>c) Repeat (b) in March 1997.</p>

Year	Objective/Task	Performance Measure	Target
Care			
Ongoing	6. Improve facilities for 'at risk' prisoners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Safety of prisoners b) Number of suicides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review accommodation and operating systems/procedures for management of 'at risk' prisoners by May 1996. b) Number of suicides will be less than 2.
	7. Improve communication for prisoners and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Information and communication channels for prisoners and their families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To deliver all letters to prisoners within 4 hours of their arrival in the establishment. b) To despatch all prisoners' mail on day of receipt by Block staff. c) To review and implement systems/procedures for providing/receiving information to and from prisoners by June 1996. d) To provide information relevant to first 24 hours of imprisonment to all admissions throughout year.

Year	Objective/Task	Performance Measure	Target
Care Ongoing	8. Improve facilities for Female Prisoners on Reception/Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Redesign and refurbishment of Reception area b) Information and communicating channels for prisoners and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To refurbish and upgrade facilities for female prisoners in reception area. a) To provide information relevant to first 24 hours of imprisonment to all admissions throughout the year.
	9. To improve Health and Safety	<p>Number of accidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reportable b) Non-reportable c) Number of complaints from local residents d) Reduce risk to staff and prisoners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Will not exceed 6 - Prisoners 3: Staff 2: Contractors 1. b) Will not exceed 80 - Prisoners 45: Staff 25: Contractors 10. c) To provide additional car parking bays thereby reducing number of complaints by local residents. d) To review current fire prevention measures/equipment and replace where necessary.

Year	Objective/Task	Performance Measure	Target
Care Ongoing	10. To improve standard and presentation of personal clothing and other linen supplied to prisoners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provision of improved facilities and (environment) b) Return of clean laundry, pressed and undamaged, to appropriate prisoner c) Number of complaints recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Completion of Laundry refurbishment by December 1996 a) Review of procedures/systems for operation of Laundry by December 96. a) Conduct Laundry Performance Survey of 100% of prisoners over one month period commencing January 1997. b) Based on Survey results, reduce number of complaints by 50% by April 1997.
	11. Improve standards of cleanliness and hygiene throughout the establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A standard of cleanliness throughout the establishment which is continually acceptable to Management b) Promotion of Hygiene Training Programme for staff/prisoners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Establish and maintain a programme of cleaning by April 1996. b) Instil in staff and ensure they maintain, standards set throughout the year. a) 50% of prisoners and 50% of staff will receive training and certification in Basic Food Handling Hygiene by March 1997

Year	Objective/Task	Performance Measure	Target
Opportunity Ongoing	12. To present prisoners with a range of opportunities to use their time in prison responsibly and to prepare for release	<p>a) Range of activities</p> <p>b) Time out of cell</p> <p>c) Number of prisoners receiving accreditation</p> <p>d) Opportunities for remanded prisoners</p>	<p>a) Young Offenders/Convicted/Remand prisoners will be offered the opportunity to participate in programmed activities - PE, Education and Personal Support Programmes. In addition, we will provide a minimum of 10 prisoner training places in Hairdressers, Laundry, Soft Furnishings, Industrial Cleaning, Gardens and Textiles throughout the year.</p> <p>b) Review outside activity programme by April 1996.</p> <p>a) 85% of Young Offenders/Convicted/Remand prisoners will have the opportunity of a minimum of 7 hours per working day of programmed activities</p> <p>a) Achieve 60% success rate for those prisoners participating in accredited courses</p> <p>a) Review and development of a more structured regime for remand prisoners based on staff/prisoner survey and/or needs analysis.</p>

Year	Objective/Task	Performance Measure	Target
VFM	13. To improve value for money and reduce Unit costs	<p>a) System of sound budgetary control</p> <p>b) Improve use of resources and ultimately reduce Unit costs</p>	<p>a) To contain the total cost expenditure to within 99.7% of budget</p> <p>a) Review of managerial duties (at all levels) by May 1996</p> <p>b) Workshop efficiency achieved against targets 90% of contracts will be delivered on time, on specification, on budget.</p> <p>c) To reduce TOIL levels to an average of 7.5 hours per individual Officer by December 1996.</p> <p>d) To review energy audit systems by December 1996.</p> <p>a) Review of staff attendance systems completed by December 1996 with options recommended for consultation/negotiation.</p> <p>a) Will not exceed average of 14 days per Staff Member.</p>
Ongoing		<p>c) Review of staff attendance pattern</p> <p>d) Average number of sick days per person</p>	

ANNEX 2

RANDOM MANDATORY DRUG TESTING AT CORNTON VALE

1. The testing programme is based on urine analysis and identifies those prisoners who have recently abused drugs.
2. For those who test positive, sanctions are applied as appropriate and access to education and addiction programmes is also made available to help individuals address their problem.
3. A number of conditions may prompt testing, with refusal to supply a sample being an offence. These include:
 - On reception or on return from temporary release on licence
 - Random selection by computer (10% of prisoners per month)
 - Reasonable suspicion that a prisoner may have recently misused drugs
 - Persistent misuse of drugs
 - As part of risk assessment (if a prisoner is being considered for release on temporary licence or for allocation to work parties).
4. The test is carried out in the MDT Unit by Prison Officers. The urine sample is divided into 2 bottles and one is tested immediately. If the result is positive, the MO will be consulted to eliminate any possibility that the result was caused by medication taken by the prisoner. (This can only be done with the prisoner's consent and information is treated in the strictest confidence.)
5. If the prisoner pleads guilty to the charge at the Orderly Room, the Governor can then deal with the case immediately. Should the prisoner challenge the results, then the second sample is sent for a test at an independent laboratory.

6. There is no tariff of punishments - the Governor can treat each case individually and act accordingly.
7. After the case has been heard the prisoner is given information about how to get help, treatment and advice on the misuse of illegal drugs.

ANNEX 3

**HM INSTITUTION CORNTON VALE
MANDATORY DRUG TESTING
STATISTICS
5 FEBRUARY - 21 MAY 1996**

Type of Test	Number	Positive	Negative	Consistent with Medication	Illicit	Refusals	Results Outstanding
Random	65	30	31	17	13		4
Reasonable Suspicion	45	35	4	15	20		6
Frequent Test Prog	27	12	11	7	5		4
Risk Assessment	14	4	7	3	1		3
Reception Tests	Nil						
Voluntary	39	29	10	20	9		
TOTAL	190	110	63	62	40		17

POSITIVE TESTS		
	Number	%
Cannabis	30	47
Opiates	23	36
Temgesics	5	7.5
Others Thioridazine	3	5
Methadone	2	3
Benzodiazepines	1	1.5
Cocaine	-	-
LSD	-	-

ANNEX 4

VERBATIM COPY OF LETTER GIVEN TO PRISONERS WHO TEST POSITIVELY IN RANDOM DRUG TEST.

You have been found guilty at Adjudication as a result of testing positive in a random drug test. It is important that you realise the possible consequences of using drugs in prison. It is illegal and it is Prison Service policy to eliminate all drugs from prison. This letter is an attempt to inform you of the harmful consequences to yourself, your family and the prison generally and to get you to think seriously about making the choice not to use drugs.

There is evidence that drugs misuse may pose a serious threat to your health, and may prevent you coping effectively with your imprisonment. It may get you into debt and expose you to bullying, intimidation and possible violence. If your family is supplying you, they may be subject to criminal prosecution if discovered. If they are financing your habit, they may suffer severe financial hardship.

Testing positive exposes you to Adjudication which may result in additional days awarded, loss of privileges including consideration for temporary release, closed visits, and may decrease your chances of parole if there is an entitlement for this. If you test positive you become liable to random frequent testing under the Mandatory Testing Rules.

Only you will know why you use drugs. It may be boredom or a way of relaxing. It may be a habit, or for cultural reasons, or for enjoyment. It may be because your friends use it or as a result of intimidation. Whatever the reason, the recent Adjudication may make you seriously look at the possible consequences of continued use and may lead you to make a choice to stop using drugs.

Cornton Vale has a drugs strategy and there are staff trained to help you address your habit. You should seek help to confront your use and at least look at why you are using, the risks you are running, and what is available here to try to help you address the problem. Your Wing Officer or Personal Officer and an addiction worker are available.

Drug testing will not go away and Cornton Vale is committed to eliminating all illegal drug use. Please study this letter carefully and seek help to hopefully get you to make the right choice it is up to you, but everything possible will be done to help you.

**EXTRACT FROM GENERAL MEDICAL NOTES PROVIDED BY LOCAL GPs ON
DETOXIFICATION AT CORNTON VALE**

Background

1. Prior to admission, forty per cent of drug abusers have had previous withdrawal seizures when coming off Temazepam. Later seizures caused by excessive Temazepam abuse in the Institution continue to be one of the major problems. Heroin abuse, although also extremely common, does not present quite the same degree of difficulty.
2. It could be dangerous to initiate Methadone prescription to those who have been abusing Heroin prior to admission. Instead, those who are on a recognised regime or prescription of Methadone should be considered for a reducing regime of Opiates.
3. Drug withdrawal regimes have been adopted according to the needs as follows:

3.1 Benzodiazepines and Opiate Users

For those using the above, but not on a prescription or topping up their prescription with Temazepam, a Diazepam A B or C regime is suggested, all of which run over one month with stepwise reductions according to profile. Lomotil should be added to alleviate symptoms of Heroin withdrawal.

3.2 Drug users on recognised Methadone prescription

For the present time Methadone is not used in Cornton Vale and until the Unit is fully established these individuals should be treated with a Dehydrocodeine Continus (DHC) regime over 14 to 21 days with a stepwise reduction according to their level of abuse.

3.3 Pregnant drug users

Those who are on high doses of Opiates or on a Methadone prescription should be withdrawn on DHC. If they are also abusing Benzodiazepines then it would be medically appropriate to also use Benzodiazepine withdrawal regime. The possibility of damage to the foetus is significantly higher in this group, both as a consequence of their abuse and a rapid withdrawal from illicit drugs.

SUICIDES AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDES AT CORNTON VALE

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Friday 23 June 1995 | Death by hanging |
| 2. | Monday 26 June 1995 | Death by hanging |
| 3. | Sunday 2 July 1995 | Attempted hanging |
| 4. | Sunday 3 December 1995 | Death by hanging |
| 5. | Friday 26 April 1996 | Death by hanging (subject to
FAI) |
| 6. | Sunday 28 April 1996 | Attempted hanging |
| 7. | Friday 24 May 1996 | Attempted hanging |
| 8. | At the time of report signature (August 1996) there had been one
further attempted hanging, in addition to the above. | |

This survey was conducted primarily as part of an exercise that local prison management requested of the social work unit. The main intention was to establish what the prisoners' view was of the kinds of things they needed help with. Information was also gathered about their perception of current services and suggestions were sought about how things should develop or be improved.

An anonymous semi-structured questionnaire was issued to all Cornton Vale inmates and they were asked to complete this themselves and return it in a sealed envelope. The assistance of supervisors ensured a 60% return rate. While there were some nil returns (i.e., blank forms) it is worth noting the relatively low level of "spoiled papers" (3) and the high amount of constructive suggestions made showing considerable awareness of the operational constraints that exist. The data was analysed by hand using descriptive stats. While some biographical information was sought the only distinctions within the population referred to relate to remand/convicted status.

Summary of Findings

Around 90% of both convicted and remand prisoners considered that they needed help or assistance during custody either a lot or sometimes. 56% of remand and 59% of convicted prisoners respectively said that they found it easy to speak to a social worker at Cornton Vale 56% of remand prisoners and 63% of convicted prisoners said they did not think that there was enough help available.

47% of remand prisoners and 37% of convicted prisoners considered that they needed help in staying out of trouble with the law. 56% of remand and 37% of convicted prisoners felt that they needed help controlling their temper. 63% of remand and 48% of convicted prisoners said they needed help controlling their use of drink or drugs. 59% of remand and 46% of convicted prisoners said that they needed assistance sorting things out with their partner or family.

In both categories over half of the respondents said that they needed help in getting a job. Half of the remand prisoners who responded said they needed help dealing with financial affairs with 30% of convicted prisoners responding the same. 66% of the remand prisoners said they needed help coping with being in prison compared to 46% of convicted prisoners. 66% of those on remand who responded said they needed assistance with accommodation compared to 56% of convicted prisoners. In both categories 44% of respondents said they needed help with the "guilt", about what they had done. 80% of those on remand who replied said that they needed help with the anger they felt about "unfair treatment" as opposed to 46% of convicted prisoners. Around half of all respondents considered that they needed help sorting things out with their family. 90% of remand respondents said they needed help in relation to rights compared with 70% of those convicted.

The responses to the open questions "what type of help is needed" and "how could prisoners receive better help", were marked by a fairly high degree of consistency. A relatively high level of dissatisfaction was expressed about the time it took to see a social worker and the point was made several times that small problems could escalate if not dealt with quickly. Several respondents expressed the view that social worker should be more pro-active in seeking out clients as well as generally being more accessible.

So far as opinions were expressed on the subject there appeared to be quite a satisfactory rating about the quality of social work service when it was actually received and in some cases work carried out by certain individuals was particularly commended.

Several respondents suggested that more attention needed to be paid to the "induction process", in terms of providing better information and properly orienting new admissions. Improved leaflets and more time for personal officers were both suggestions made. A number of respondents noted that while those with a drink problem could attend a group, at the time of writing those seeking assistance with a drug problem did not have access to this type of service.

The issue of confidentiality was a recurrent theme in prisoners' responses, indeed although the survey was conducted anonymously several prisoners took steps to mask their own "biographical details". While one prisoner expressed the view that confidentiality did not exist at all within the institution, there was a more widely held concern about the current system which some prisoners felt inhibited them from relaying information about sensitive issues. A further issue which emerged related to this was the view expressed by some prisoners about the developing role of the prison officer. The following excerpt reflects this type of view as well as some of the other points made "It takes too long for a romeo prisoner to get to see any social workers, time stops and you can feel very cut off from things. You have too much time locked up so you think more negative thoughts after all a person is innocent until proven guilty, so remand should be a short time only for reports, etc., they should and could do reports on a person within a week or two."

"I feel every admission to Cornton Vale should see a social worker within a couple of days as you can be left feeling isolated and confused, also more outside help as you can feel agitated about being personal with the person who locks the door on you and writes reports. Can an officer be trained honestly to do two jobs at once. I'm not sure that its a good idea to call an officer a social worker....."

The other area which attracted most comment in the survey was in relation to visits where increased quality and quantity of access was requested particularly where young children were involved.

Commentary/Analysis

Given the variables involved, care must always be taken when attempting to generalise from a modest survey such as this. Nevertheless the views expressed by 60% of the prison population at Cornton Vale on one given day provide an interesting snap shot and a good deal of relevant and useful information.

Perhaps not surprisingly the vast majority of all respondents reported that they needed help during their stay at Cornton Vale. Complaints about access to the appropriate services and speed of response indicate that current arrangements need to be examined. Any judgements about this subsequently made need to realistically balance the expressed need along with the resources available and the appropriateness of the request.

A relatively low proportion of prisoners indicated that they need help staying out of trouble. If we make the assumption that a significant number of these women are "repeat offenders", this is quite concerning and raises various questions about assessment including how much effort should be directed at shifting this attitude? This matter is further complicated, as we know from the literature that some of the most dangerous prisoners are likely to minimise or deny their offence. At the moment social work services in prison are intended to be targetted at the most vulnerable and the most dangerous and apart from Schedule 1 offenders, mainly on the basis of voluntarism. How far the professional "pushes" in attempting to address offending behaviour requires a balance between meeting community safety requirements while respecting the rights of the individual. However if it is typical that less than half of the prison population consider they need help staying out of trouble with the law we probably need more information why women prisoners think this before we can respond properly to them.

As might have been anticipated respondents considered that they needed high levels of assistance in relation to practical matters such as accommodation and serving the sentence, demonstrating that there is considerable potential for developing the role of welfare advisor amongst prison staff. Many respondents however spontaneously reported concern about the limits of this role and questioned the extent to which officers could undertake therapeutic work given their over-riding duty to ensure security. This perception which is routinely reported in surveys of this type and is even more evident in male institutions, must be taken seriously and reinforces the need for relevant training and support to be available for staff embarking on this type of work. Prison based social work staff have a key role in supporting prison staff and helping them to develop in this area.

More than half of all prisoners felt that they needed assistance in sorting things out with their own family and many respondents expressed their hope that contact with their young children could be increased at visits. This is an area no matter how far developed that could probably never completely pacify the "pain of separation", however the need expressed here would in the writer's view at the very least justify the current criteria for child care type visits and the social work unit's involvement in this being reviewed.

It is encouraging to note that current developments at Cornton Vale as specified in the strategic plan are likely to go a considerable way to meeting the need that respondents identify of those with a drug problem.

Extremely high rates of prisoners considered that they needed help finding out what their right were. This was certainly a point raised in the Dobash book, "The Imprisonment of Women" 10 years ago. If we combine this with the almost equally high response from those who considered that they needed help with feeling angry about the way they have been treated, particularly amongst remand respondents, the writer would speculate that this may well relate as much to matters at court as well as due process and equity at Cornton Vale. While the "improved" induction/assessment process of which the social work unit will be an integrated part should address part of this problem there may also be a strong argument for offering some type of specialist legal/welfare service, on the premises.

Remand prisoners consistently scored almost 10% higher than convicted prisoners in terms of expressed need. This level of response is most likely to relate to the early stage and uncertainty of the criminal process that people in this category experience. If we combine these results with the information available from P.O.S. returns for inmates on remand (which paints a similar picture) there certainly seems to be an argument for targeting more, or increasing the amount of social work resources to this category of prisoner.

INSPECTION TEAM

HM INSTITUTION CORNTON VALE

19-31 MAY 1996

Clive Fairweather	HM Chief Inspector
Kate Donegan	HM Deputy Chief Inspector
Dr Mike Ryan	Medical Consultant
Ron Kite	Consultant Inspector
Brian Henaghen	Staff Officer
Lynda McNeil	Clerical Support