

<b>PRISON</b>	<b>HMP YOI POLMONT</b>		<b>YEAR (1 APRIL – 31 MARCH)</b>	2022 – 2023	
<b>Total number of visits</b>	75	<b>Total number of missed weeks</b>	0	<b>Total number of IPM hours</b>	306
<b>Total number of prisoner requests received</b>	18	<b>Number of IPMs in the team (as at 31 March)</b>		11	

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Polmont has continued to show a remarkable improvement in conditions from two years ago, going from strength to strength, and that should be the takeaway message of this report. The Management Team has a clear vision, and their visibility around the prison ensures this is being driven forward by all staff. The prison managed the transfer of women from HMP Cornton Vale exceptionally well, despite the limitations of the buildings in terms of housing women with acute needs. It was however, of concern to the IPM Team that this was not planned further in advance, given SPS will have known for some time this was necessary. It remains of concern that of the time of writing, Polmont are still not clear on who will replace the prisoners moving to HMP Stirling from June 2023. From the position of the IPM Team, this seems a basic failing by SPS in terms of their overall population management strategy.

Of particular note is the amazing work the prison has done to reduce the population held in the SRU. The IPM Team cannot adequately express how delighted they are by this change, that not only demonstrates a real change in culture in the prison but will also have improved the lives of all those young men who are no longer segregated. This has obviously caused challenges but the work by the staff to manage this must be acknowledge, from the Governor and his leadership team, to the staff in the SRU and the officers on the halls.

Where issues arose, the prison were swift to take action, and were open and transparent in their dealings with the IPM Team. Our comments and scorings were provided in the knowledge that the prison is on the path to being a high performing prison.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS	Overall RAG rating		
<p><b>Standard 1: Lawful and Transparent Custody</b></p> <p>Reception was well run and staff dealt with prisoners gently and with sensitivity. Some concerns were raised around food options for those who have ongoing court cases, which the prison took steps to address.</p>	□	□	✓
<p><b>Standard 2: Decency</b></p> <p>The prison was generally clean and living conditions were decent. Some halls were refurbished during the year. Prisoners said they could access cleaning equipment when they needed it. Toiletries were readily available.</p> <p>As at other prisons, the cost of living was raised as an increasing concern for prisoners as canteen prices increased. This was coupled with concerns raised periodically by prisoners about the quality of the food. The women in particular have concerns about the calorific content of meals. When IPMs sampled the food they were disappointed that the majority of options were ultra processed. The challenges of providing three meals each day within budget is a challenge for all prisons. SPS HQ and the Scottish Government should consider if the budget is appropriate to allow for healthy and nutritious food to be provided.</p>	□	✓	□
<p><b>Standard 3: Personal Safety</b></p> <p>Generally the prison feels well controlled. Violence peaked in July and August but has been on a downward trajectory since then. The route was calm and well managed, and prisoners reported that they felt safe when attending activities.</p>	□	□	✓
<p><b>Standard 4: Effective, Courteous and Humane Use of Authority</b></p> <p>The prison had worked hard to reduce the number of people being held in the SRU. The SRU staff demonstrated excellent knowledge about the people in their care and had a clear understanding of their role and the Management Team's expectations of them.</p> <p>Management of security appeared appropriate overall. The IPMs noted the difficulty in achieving the right balance between security and reducing drugs in the prison, and allowing prisoners some personal freedoms such as allowing clothing and items being sent in. There were some concerns about how the testing of items worked, and in particular false positives of some items.</p>	□	□	✓
<p><b>Standard 5: Respect, Autonomy and Protection Against Mistreatment</b></p>	□	□	✓

<p>Relationships between staff and prisoners continued to improve over the year. IPMs witnessed examples of compassionate and caring actions by staff across the halls. The atmosphere was generally pleasant. Staff seem engaged and enthused about their job and had a clear understanding of the expectations on them.</p> <p>There was good visibility of management around the prison, and staff and prisoners reported seeing management and being able to raise issues with them.</p>			
<p><b>Standard 6: Purposeful Activity</b></p> <p>Activity numbers rose throughout the year and the range of activities on offer was exceptional. Prisoners who were at activities appeared fully engaged and valued the time they had there.</p> <p>The Polmont Youth Theatre Production was very positive. One of the attendees commented he ‘could be himself’ and ironically that ‘it’s one of the places I don’t have to act’.</p> <p>Prisoners complimented Polmont as a place to get qualifications.</p> <p>There remained some concerns about time out of cell for some prisoners during the year.</p>	☐	☐	✓
<p><b>Standard 7: Transitions from Custody into the Community</b></p> <p>Progression was of concern to a number of prisoners, most notably the women. This was due to a lack of capacity on Offending Behaviour Programmes across the wider SPS estate. The SPS must take action to rectify this. Prisoners were well-informed about their personal situations, and overall the IPM Team believed the prison were doing everything in their gift to manage progression, and support those towards less secure conditions or release.</p>	☐	✓	☐
<p><b>Standard 8: Organisational Effectiveness</b></p> <p>The IPMs were concerned about the lack of preparation time the prison was given before receiving prisoners from HMP Cornton Vale. They were further concerned that plans for which population would be housed in the prison when HMP Stirling opened were not made. Despite this the transfer was run successfully. The use of HMP Cornton Vale staff for continuity purposes was to be commended, as was the individual case management approach taken for every transfer.</p> <p>GEOAmev capacity and performance issues, across the SPS estate, resulted in hospital cancellations. This was an ongoing national concern which had been escalated to the HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland and who escalated concerns to the SPS Chief Executive Officer and the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary.</p>	☐	✓	☐
<p><b>Standard 9: Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <p>The biggest concern regarding healthcare was the timing of medication. Many prisoners, especially on the female halls, reported being given medication at inappropriate times, for example being provided sleeping tablets at p.m. This practice</p>	☐	✓	☐

occur across the prison estate, but is not acceptable and the SPS and the NHS should take action to end it. The IPMs were aware of the mitigation and constant review carried out by the NHS and the prison regarding this matter.					
<b>RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status key:</b>	Some serious concerns	Some slight concerns	No concerns / good practice		
<i>RAG rating: where IPMs felt each standard would be rated given their experience - not a complete analysis but based on the judgement of the IPM team</i>					

KEY ISSUES	
1.	Population management
2.	Medication timings
3.	Purposeful activity and time out of cell

ENCOURAGING OBSERVATIONS
IPMs were pleased to hear about the range of activities that took place in the prison, for example the talk by the Livingston Football Manager, the visits by Celtic and Rangers players and the Polmont Youth Theatre to name a few. The prison is performing at a high level and is on an upward trajectory.

CONCLUSION
This has been a good year for HMP &YOI Polmont. The prison is almost unrecognisable from two years ago. The staff are engaged and this is evidenced by the relationships between staff and prisoners around the prison. It is regrettable that decisions about which populations will be held at Polmont have not yet been made, and there is a risk that the prison will not be given appropriate time to prepare for the population. The failure to make these decisions and communicate them creates unnecessary uncertainty. It will be important, to quote the Governor, that whatever population is placed in Polmont compliments rather than complicates those they are already holding.