

BARLINNIE PRISON VISITING COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2011

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Section 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE (V.C.)

The statutory responsibilities of V.C's and of their members are set out in Part 17 of The Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions(Scotland) Rules 2006 made under Section8(2) of the Prisons(Scotland)Act 1989(c45).That states:"Rules made under section 39 of this Act shall prescribe the functions of visiting committees,and shall among other things require members to pay frequent visits to the prison and hear complaints which may be made by the prisoners and report to (Scottish Ministers) any matter which they consider it expedient to report; any member of a visiting committee may at any time enter the prison and shall have free access to every part thereof and to every prisoner"

A Visiting Committee is specifically charged to

- Co-operate with Scottish Ministers and the Governor in promoting the efficiency of the prison;
- Inquire into and report to Scottish Ministers upon any matter into which they may ask them to inquire;
- Immediately bring to the attention of the Governor any circumstances pertaining to the administration of the prison or the condition of a prisoner when they consider this necessary;if the Governor has not remedied matters within a reasonable period of time,they shall bring the matter to the notice of Scottish Ministers;
- From time to time,inquire into the state of the prison premises and inspect the food and drink provided to the prisoners and if at any time find these unsatisfactory,record any deficiencies in their minute book and send a copy to Scottish Ministers and the Governor;
- Hear and investigate any applications or complaints which prisoners may make to them and report their findings to the Governor and Scottish Ministers;
- Visit the prison fortnightly by not fewer than two of its members;
- At its discretion inspect prison records other than personal records,prisoners' records and security manuals or other papers which have implications for security and make a note of their inspection in their minutes;

Make an annual report for the period of 12 months ending on 31st March each year to Scottish Ministers about the state of the establishment and its administration and include any advice and suggestions they consider appropriate.

Section 2

HMP BARLINNIE

HMP Barlinnie is the largest prison in Scotland opened in 1882. It has a contract capacity of 1104 although in practice overcrowding means that this figure is greatly exceeded

It receives prisoners from West of Scotland courts serving sentences of less than 4 years. Prisoners are housed in 6 residential halls with one of these being exclusively for remand prisoners. All the cellular accommodation has internal sanitation.

There are workshops and training facilities which offer work and training on a daily basis.

The Social Work service is provided by Glasgow City Council and Education by Motherwell College. Industries, employment and training are all in house provision.

Other external agencies are involved in delivering various prisoner programmes.

Extensive modernisation works have been undertaken over the past few years.

Section 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.This is the annual report of the Barlinnie Visiting Committee (V.C.) for the year ended 31st march 2011.

During the year the V.C. has held meetings and members have undertaken rota visits in accordance with our statutory requirements.

Our observations on the prison operation are noted and the work of the V.C. detailed.

Once again our work took place against a background of continuing overcrowding.However the average monthly population of 1367 is down on last year but did start to increase towards the end of the year as a result of transfers in from other prisons.

Despite this, housekeeping standards remain high and staff continue to work on quality programmes and regimes and a full range of out of cell activities is still being offered.

Governor Bill McKinlay retired during the year and was replaced by Derek McGill and the V.C. would like to thank both gentlemen and all the staff for their help assistance and co-operation which makes our work easier.

V.Cs are once again the subject of examination by the Scottish Government and a consultation exercise took place into the 'Independent Monitoring of Prisons' to which we all responded and the Barlinnie response can be found in the appendix.It is only four years since the last review and the sooner the uncertainty of our future is resolved the better.

Allan Devlin,
Chairman

For further information contact the secretary, Gerard McElroy
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Section 4

PRISON OPERATION

During our visits we see all aspects of activity within the prison and would comment on the following.

2. Healthcare and Mental Health

The Healthcare centre is an extremely busy part of Barlinnie and there are always high demands made on all healthcare staff. Staffing improved during the year and a new lead doctor took over. Various programmes were initiated by the team to address health issues. The Naloxene project which trains prisoners in identifying overdose and how to assist with Naloxene has been very positive. The mental health team have been providing weekly focus groups for prisoners with mental health illness. A new Foreign National Clinic started and has proved successful. Waiting time for dental health issues was flagged up by the V.C. Dispensing methadone still takes up an excessive amount of staff time. It was noted that following inspection the Health centre was compliant with SPS healthcare standards.

3. Food

The size of the establishment and numbers involved present huge challenges for the catering department. All diets are catered for and in line with Scottish Prison service policy, healthy eating is the target.

Summer and winter menus are prepared and issued to the Halls. A very successful food focus group operates and there is always positive feedback. Catering staff help prisoners from different ethnic backgrounds to celebrate various festivals.

This year a new development was the provision of snack bags when prisoners were watching football.

4. Equality and Diversity

The SPS is committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights. This is evident in the treatment and provision for prisoners at Barlinnie. Given the ever increasing numbers adherence to this policy is all the more important.

5. Education/Training/Employment

Education, training and work opportunities are offered on a daily basis. During the year new opportunities continued to be developed, covering production, vocational training and service and this has been very welcome.

Training continues in catering and forklift operation. Recycling is improving and there has been a large increase in certificated training. The prison is now seeing the benefit of the poly tunnels and Barlinnie is certainly in bloom, which is favourably commented on by visitors.

Education is provided by Motherwell College and a full range of educational opportunities are offered.

6. Residential Accomodation

The large population is stretching the available accommodation to the limit. However out of cell time is maximised with prisoners going to work, training, education, recreation and visits. With such a large population, housekeeping issues become important. However the V.C. has not noticed a decline in standards in the Halls.

In the First Night Centre in E Hall a new system for issuing clean small kit was introduced and there was a change to laundering quilts instead of just covers.

7. Prison Estates and Management

The Estates Management unit worked in maintaining and upgrading internal and external facilities throughout the year and had a full programme of work. Small fitness gyms were introduced in two of the Halls and this extra activity was welcomed. New furniture was provided in the visits area.

8. Link Centre

Increased admissions had a significant effect on the centre and over 700 prisoners per month pass through for screening and induction

9. Family Contact Centre

Currently staffed by two officers, one more being recruited. The centre organises the Family Induction Programme, the Positive Parenting Programme and assists the addiction service with the Positive Relationship Programme. The Family Induction Programme is well attended and appreciated by prisoners' families and greatly assists families' understanding of what life will be like for a prisoner and helps them to work through the experience together. The Positive Parenting Programme which is funded by the NHS has been a major success and the co-ordinator has just won an international award. Each session can take six prisoners and partners and feedback is very positive. We understand that Barlinnie is the only prison to offer this programme.

The Family Contact Officers arrange a large programme of events for prisoners and families supported by outside agencies and individuals. The Mitchell Library is one of these. There are learning opportunities at visit time. Festive events are well appreciated but everything is done on 'a budget'.

10. Employment Services.

The Changing Lane Programme to support prisoners into work is still a success along with Local Regeneration Agencies, Routes out of Prison and Job Centre Plus.

Section 5.

The Work of the V.C.

11. Statistics

Recommended complement of VC members	25
Number of members at start of year	24
Number of members at end of year	22
New members joining	0
Members leaving	2
Number of VC meetings during year	4
Average attendance at meetings	10
Total number of prisoner requests	14
Total number of VC rota visits to prison	46

The visiting committee has a membership of 25 drawn from eight local authorities nominating a mixture of councillors and lay members. Current membership is as follows:

Name	Nominating Authority
Richard W. Bett	South Lanarkshire Council
Councillor Ruth Black	Glasgow City Council
Councillor Andy Carmichael	South Lanarkshire Council
Stewart Collins	West Dunbartonshire Council
Maria Corr	Glasgow City Council
Councillor Rose-Ann Cunninghame	East Ayrshire Council
Anne Desport	South Lanarkshire Council
Allan Devlin	North Lanarkshire Council
Jason Ditton	Glasgow City Council
Catherine Fallon	Glasgow City Council
Councillor Bobby Lawson	South Lanarkshire Council
Councillor Celia Lawson	Renfrewshire Council
Anne Mills	Glasgow City Council
Councillor Gerard McElroy	North Lanarkshire Council
Councillor Patrick McGlinchey	West Dunbartonshire Council
Frances McGrade	Glasgow City Council
Councillor Innes Nelson	Inverclyde Council
Marion Owens	North Lanarkshire Council
Councillor Mary Paris	Glasgow City Council
Tom Swinney	North Ayrshire Council
Councillor Gordon Stewart	North Lanarkshire Council
Ann Wilkieson	Glasgow City Council

Meetings are held quarterly in the prison. The secretary prepares a rota which ensures two members are in the prison every fortnight. Generally we give notice of our visit so that an escort is provided and we are handed on from one part of the prison to another. However some of our members are key trained and do not require an escort.

The following is a summary of members' attendance:

Name	Rota visits	Meetings	Comments
Richard W.Bett	0	0	
Ruth Black	0	0	
Andy Carmichael	2	1	
Stewart Collins	3	2	
Maria Corr	1	0	
Rose-Anne Cuninghame	3	3	
Anne Desport	2	0	
Allan Devlin	4	3	Chairman
Jason Ditton	2	1	
Jennifer Dunn	1	0	Resigned 10 th January 2011
Catherine Fallon	2	2	
Bobby Lawson	2	4	
Celia Lawson	1	0	
Anne Mills	1	1	Leave of absence
Catherine Morrison	1	0	Resigned 28 th January 2011
Gerard McElroy	6	4	Secretary
Patrick McGlinchey	0	0	
Frances McGrade	1	2	
Innes Nelson	0	1	
Marion Owens	1	0	
Mary Paris	2	3	
Tom Swinney	7	4	Vice-Chairman
Gordon Stewart	4	3	
Ann Wilkieson	0	2	

A system is in operation within the prison for prisoner requests to be dealt with by the VC . Members interview prisoners,log the details of the request and refer to the appropriate prison management.The outcome is noted on the request form and the prisoner is notified.

The following is a summary of the requests received:

Category	2009/10	2010/11
Accomodation	2	0
Education/training/work	1	0
Estates issues/conditions	5	0
Family/visits	4	5
Food	1	0
Health	3	6
Transfers	9	1
Staff/prisoners issues	3	0
Housing	1	0
Sentence Issues	0	1
Canteen Prices	0	1

The issues about visits were all complaints of the prisoner being placed on closed visits.

12. Association of Visiting Committees

This is our national association and the Chairman and Secretary attend the business meetings.All AVC communications are circulated to our committee members.

13.Training.

The committee has a local training co-ordinator to assist with local and national training.Members attended the national conference and visits to other establishments.At our meetings we have a training input on some aspect of prison operation.

This is a record of members attendance at training events :

MEMBER'S NAME	SPS TRAINING DELIVERED LOCALLY			
	Course Name (Tutor)	Course Name (Tutor)	Course Name (Tutor)	Course Name (Tutor)
	Compliance Issues,Service Agreements,Population,CPs,Internal Training—Neal Acheson	Positive relationship programme—Addictions Team/Relationship Scotland	Introduction from new governor,Derek McGill	YOI regime vs Adult—Phil Woodlock
Andy Carmichael				X
Stewart Collins			X	X
Rose-Ann Cunninghame	X		X	X
Allan Devlin		X	X	X
Jason Ditton				X
Catherine Fallon		X		X
Bobby Lawson	X	X	X	X
Gerard McElroy	X	X	X	X
Innes Nelson				X
Tom Swinney	X	X	X	X
Anne Mills				X
Mary Paris	X	X	X	
Gordon Stewart	X	X	X	
Ann Wilkieson	X	X		
Frances McGrade		X	X	

Appendix

CONSULTATION ON INDEPENDENT MONITORING OF PRISONS

RESPONSE OF THE BARLINNIE VISITING COMMITTEE

QUESTION 1: IS THE MONITORING ROLE OF THE VC REQUIRED TO COMPLEMENT THE SCRUTINY ROLE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHIEF INSPECTOR OF PRISONS.

Yes. VCs operate very differently from HMCIP. VCs have a distinctive role. Our visits are unannounced and frequent. The VC has access to management, staff (including external service providers) and prisoners almost on a daily basis and is in a position to problem solve, intervene and improve a situation almost immediately. This contrasts with the structured system under which HMCIP operates i.e. formally arranged inspections and subsequent reporting. VCs currently have a good working relationship with HMCIP and both recognise and understand each other's role

QUESTION 2 : SHOULD VCs BE DEVELOPED AS ENVISAGED BY THE 2005 REVIEW OF VCs AND RE-ESTABLISHED AS IMBs

Yes. The 2005 Review was comprehensive and detailed. The then Scottish Government accepted 32 out of the 39 recommendations and the new SG endorsed these, and the VCs and AVC set about implementing them with regard to recruitment and training.

Neither the subsequent Crerar Review or the Sinclair Review made any recommendations in respect of VCs and there has been ongoing dialogue between VCs (as represented by the AVC) and the SG regarding matters arising from the 2005 review.

The change of name to Independent Monitoring Board more clearly defines the VC role and should be made.

The consultation document notes with regard to the 2005 review

".....concluded that VCs perform an important and valuable role in ensuring the effective and fair operations of prisons"

That is still an accurate reflection on and summary of, the work of VCs.

QUESTION 3 : COULD THE GOVERNMENT INTEGRATE THE MONITORING FUNCTION OF VCs INTO HMCIP AND REMOVE VCs AS SEPARATE PUBLIC BODIES.

No, because this would cost a lot of money. If there was integration, more inspectors would be required to carry out the amount of visits being made by the VCs and the report highlights this. VCs are inexpensive and cost effective. They are at the 'cellface' every day and their intervention can stop complaints going to SPSO and save money. Our work in prisons can stop Human Rights issues arising further down the line. VCs are a statutory body and have a clear role separate from HMCIP and should remain as such. As one of our members said "if we didn't exist, someone would have to invent us"

The Visiting Committee values its independence from the SPS. Members are volunteers who help to keep a check on the prison operation and are seen to be doing this while not being part of the 'system'. Importantly, prisoners appreciate being able to discuss issues in confidence with such a body.

Some sort of independent monitoring of prisons has existed for over 130 years, VC powers being included in the Prisons(Scotland) Act 1877.

The whole proposal about integration begs the question why the Scottish Government would want to leave Scotland as the only part of the UK without independent monitoring of prisons.