

Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee

Annual Report

Year ending 31 March 2011



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Section 1: Statutory Role of the Visiting Committee

The statutory responsibilities of Visiting Committees and of their members are set out in Part 17 of The Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions (Scotland) Rules 2006 made under Section 8(2) of the Prisons (Scotland) Act 1989 (c.45). That states:

"Rules made under section 39 of this Act shall prescribe the functions of visiting committees, and shall among other things require the members to pay frequent visits to the prison and hear any 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 they 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 31 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: Description of the Prison

Governor in charge - Sue Brooks, from October 2010

Located in the West Side of Edinburgh on the main A71, Edinburgh prison is in an area known locally as Saughton. The prison is situated in a predominately residential area and has good transport and road links to the city centre, which provides easy access both for local courts and visitors to the prison. The building of the prison started in approximately 1914 with the first prisoner being received about 1920.

The prison has been completely rebuilt in recent years and is the first SPS establishment to complete such a refurbishment programme. The opening of Ratho House in January 2009 marked the completion of a 10 year redevelopment.

2.1 Prison Capacity and Population

Edinburgh is classed as a local or community facing prison and receives prisoners from the courts in Edinburgh, the Lothians & Borders. The prison holds adult male prisoners who are on remand or convicted awaiting sentence, and convicted prisoners serving sentences from non-payment of fines to life. There are four residential halls: Glenesk, Hermiston, Ingliston and Ratho. Future development of Edinburgh population will see female convicted prisoners being held within Ratho House with an implementation date of late July 2011. The prison also held under 21 remand prisoners until March 2011, when they were transferred to Polmont Young Offenders Institute (YOI).

The prison also provides a national facility for Sex Offenders and Non-offence related Protections. The remaining prisoners represent those prisoners from the Lothian and Border CJA area.

HMP Edinburgh's service level agreement stipulates a design capacity of 872 with 50 additional prisoner places meaning an operating population of 932. The prison has an agreed Assessed Operational Limit of 962, which is the maximum capacity possible while maintaining minimum legal requirements.

HALL	CAPACITY	OPTIMUM	AS AT 24/05/11
GLENESK	125	185	186
HERMISTON	283	283	277
INGLISTON	348	348	344
RATHO	116	116	111
TOTALS	872	932	918

2.2 Prison Estate

Residential Accommodation

Edinburgh has four main accommodation halls plus the segregation unit. The four halls are:

Glenesk Hall houses those held on remand, or convicted and awaiting sentence,

Ingliston Hall houses long term prisoners, including sex offenders and others on non offence protection

Hermiston Hall houses mainly short term prisoners and the First Night in Custody suite,

Ratho Hall houses top end prisoners. It represents the new style of accommodation with ‘greywater’ facilities for capturing rainwater for use with toilet flushing and in-cell showers. This hall is to accommodate women prisoners later in 2011 while the top end male prisoners are to be transferred to other establishments.

The prison has a well equipped sports hall, gymnasium, kitchen and prisoner reception area. The entrance to the establishment is of new design and incorporates administrative offices, staff training area, other staff facilities and purpose built visit complex.

The HUB

The HUB incorporates Health Care, Education, Social Work, Programmes, Links Centre, award winning library run jointly with the City of Edinburgh, Chaplaincy and Chapel. It aims to provide a positive environment for the delivery of interventions and support services for prisoners.

Visitor Centre

There is a separate Prisoner Visitors Centre in a separate building, just outside the Prison buildings. In agreement with the Onward Trust, the current service provider is the Salvation Army who will run the service until 2014. A full time Centre Co-ordinator is responsible for

ongoing development work and is supported by a family support worker plus a number of volunteers. The centre co-ordinator continues to build relationships with community based agencies such as Families Outside, Fairer Scotland and literacy partners in an attempt to provide support and assistance to prisoner's families.

The centre also supplements the work of the prison Family Contact Development Officers in signposting family members to engage with relevant agencies and organisations according to need as part of a prisoners future. This is an integrated part of the Offender Outcomes requirements in recognising the needs of children and families under the European conventions and Edinburgh is uniquely placed in terms of facilities and location.

See also Section 5.2

2.3 Prisoner Opportunities and Support

Community Facing Establishment

As a community facing establishment the prison works closely with the Lothian & Borders Community Justice Authority to assist with the planning and delivery of key services to prisoners on release. In terms of Reducing Reoffending, partnership working is an overarching objective and good practical links have been made with a range of organisations focusing on Health Care, Addictions, Literacy, Employment and Employability.

Prisoner Programmes

A dedicated group of staff provide a range of programmes to address offending behaviour. Programmes delivered are either accredited programmes or approved activities, and include Constructs, Rolling STOP (for Sex Offenders), SROBP (Substance Related Offending Behaviour Programme), VPP (Violence Prevention Programme) Alcohol Awareness and Drug Relapse for Change.

Links Centre

Edinburgh continues to develop its community facing strategy to reinforce links and working partnerships with external agencies and prisoner support services such as Job Centre Plus, Housing, Debt Advisors, Bereavement Counselling, Drug Support, APEX and HOPE. The link centre continues to act as the single largest referral to the Community Link Centre service delivered by SACRO on behalf of Edinburgh City Council.

Employment

Edinburgh has an extensive and well-equipped Training Centre which opened in November 2005. It provides opportunities and employment for prisoners in Building Crafts including Timber Construction, Tiling, Painting & Decorating, Bricklaying, Mono-block/Path construction, Electrical and Forklift Driving. During the year a motor repair workshop was opened by former racing driver, Sir Jackie Stewart. He made other visits to the prison to talk

to prisoners on literacy. Additional employment is provided in support services such as Library, Laundry, Kitchens, Gardens/Grounds Maintenance, Industrial Cleaning, Recycling and Domestic duties. Prisoners can also attend Living Skills and Restart which are short programmes designed to assist prisoners in preparation for release.

Education

Carnegie College is contracted to provide prisoner education within the establishment, with the focus on numeracy, literacy, and IT skills. One to one support can also be provided as appropriate to meet the needs of individuals who have an acute need. Other opportunities for more demanding learning and Open University studies are available. Art and Music are also on offer both acting as a door to education and an addition to other learning. Edinburgh prison, has a unique additional IT tuition in the form of a “Microsoft Academy”, which is delivered by one of the Regimes staff.

Healthcare

The Health Centre provides a full range of prisoner care, covering normal medical requirements plus Dentist, Optician, Chiropody, Physiotherapy and Drug Testing services. Current priorities are drug treatment, dispensing Methadone to around 180 prisoners daily and mental health provision. There has been significant effort in providing mental health facilities, including a day care programme, fitness / relaxation sessions and a dedicated workshop (Hobbies) for those with mental health issues. Records indicate that 80% of the population have mental health issues and /or some form of substance misuse. In addition there are close working links with NHS locally to provide mental health referral and outpatient clinics for prisoner health care delivery. The Health care staff are fully engaged in preparation for the NHS takeover of the prisoners’ health care.

Social Care

Phoenix Futures provide addictions services on contract and operate within the prison as part of the national drug strategy offering a variety of support services for prisoners while in prison and after release through transitional care arrangements.

Edinburgh City Council provides Social Work Services on a contract basis with a focus on Supervised Release Orders, Extended Sentences, Circular 18 offenders (any offence against a child) plus any prisoner with a sentence of over 4 years. A general duty of service is also provided as necessary to all prisoners. The Social Work team comprises one team Leader and 6.5 Social Workers plus one administrator provided by SPS.

Spiritual Care

The Chaplaincy has 1 full-time and, 6 part-time Chaplains who offer a full range of spiritual services, with further support provided by a volunteer from the Salvation Army. Given the multi-faith population, the prison also has the services of an Imam who comes in weekly from Edinburgh City Mosque. HOPE also provide a visiting service from the Links Centre but is independent from the work of the Chaplaincy team.

Human Resources

Edinburgh's current staffing complement is 430 with a staff in-post figure of 435 at the end of May 2011. This includes 204 D+ uniformed Officers (residential/regimes/programmes/catering) with a further 98 C+ Operations Officers and 38 E+ uniformed Line Managers. The remaining 90 staff include the local management team, healthcare staff and administration.

Edinburgh has also achieved "Healthy Working Lives" Bronze and Silver Award and retains its coveted IIP status.

Performance Assurance

The prison's performance assurance shows a demonstrable improvement trend across the year, specifically concentrating on delivery of the service level agreement and the new performance assurance model implemented by Prisons Directorate. This incorporates weekly and monthly review of performance data in line with the Directorate business plan.

2.4 Summary

The prison's ability to deliver has been greatly enhanced through the provision of an establishment fit for purpose. The completion of development work has seen an entire change of conditions and facilities to provide opportunity for prisoners. This is set against the backdrop of continuing high numbers during this and previous years, with Edinburgh's population regularly being 6% above design capacity.

HMP Edinburgh is committed to playing a major role locally in achieving Correctional Excellence, Reducing Offending and contributing significantly to a Safer Scotland.

Looking to the future there are two significant challenges on the horizon, firstly the decision to change the use of Ratho Hall from top end prisoners to accommodating women prisoners. This will have wide ranging implications across the whole establishment, and secondly the transition of healthcare to the NHS, due to take effect from November 2011.

Edinburgh staff and management however see these changes as an ongoing opportunity and evolution of Edinburgh's role in supporting the changing needs of SPS and are committed to providing excellent care and safety for staff, prisoners and the public.

Section 3: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This has been a busy and challenging year for the VC. There has been a considerable turnover of VC members. Several resignations meant 3 recruitment campaigns in the year and a number of new members joining the committee. The committee operated all year without the full complement of members and for several months without a VC Clerk. We also changed all our record keeping from a paper based system to become fully electronic. While

this has its own teething problems, the number of prisoners' applications to the VC increased by nearly one third from 63 to 95 in the reporting period. See section 6.

The VC submitted a robust response to the Scottish Government's further and hurried consultation on the future of independent monitoring of Scottish Penal Establishments. We still await the result of the Government's deliberations six months on.

There have been changes within the prison. The principal change was the departure of the previous Governor in Charge, Nigel Ironside and the arrival of Sue Brookes in October 2010. A number of management staff completed significant acting up periods and two new unit managers took up their posts. Young Offenders were transferred to YOI Polmont from 28 March 2010. The prison was expecting to change to National Top end status and considerable work was done on a development plan in preparation. Then on 22 March came the announcement that women prisoners would start to be housed in Ratho Hall later in 2011, with existing top end male prisoners to be transferred to other establishments.

Alongside these changes, there was the severe winter weather, during which time staff and management exceeded all expectations and requirements to keep the prison running as near normal as possible, under extremely difficult circumstances. See section 5.4

There were other challenges for the establishment with 3 recorded deaths in custody and 20 notable incidents of which 15 involved assaults, one of these was against an officer. The VC chair was informed of these by the Governor or a duty manager. There was one potential hostage situation, which was resolved, with appropriate intervention by staff. The VC noted heavy demands on the Prisoner Complaints (CP) system, with a total of 2,443 during the year. See Section 5.3

There were a number of excellent achievements. The prison library received a prestigious award, while many of the prisons key performance indicators improved or were exceeded. In February, the first Prison Watch scheme in an SPS establishment (see Section 5.5) was launched by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice. We congratulate the Governor and staff on their achievements.

Section 4: Report on areas of the prison regime

4.1 Health care and mental health

The VC noted the continued instability in health care staffing during the year. At times there was a full compliment reported; but there were periods when the health care teams had vacancies, putting extra burdens on the service. While the mental health team was under strength it was dealing with around 70 referrals per month, with nearly half being classed as urgent. The average waiting time for an urgent psychiatric appointment was 2 days, while less urgent cases were seen within 10 days.

During the year, there were a number of medical emergencies in the prison, and healthcare staff were commended for their swift and effective interventions.

The Addictions team are to be commended for setting up drop in clinics for prisoners in one hall, with plans to extend to other halls. Other initiatives commended are the Keep Well Programme for preventative cardio vascular screening, respiratory and sexual health specialist clinics. The Addictions Support Area multi disciplinary team was nominated for a Butler Award for its pioneering work in Ratho Hall.

The VC responded to 11 recorded health care issues from prisoners, down from 14 last year. These included delays in receiving medication and accessing dental appointments. However we also learned that some prisoners miss their dental treatment possibly due to fears of what it involves. This causes problems and delays in administering the system.

The VC's main concern was the safe keeping of medicines. A number of prisoners in one hall told us that they had no lockable cabinets in their cells and no locks to cell doors. This was raised with the hall manager we have since been assured that the prisoners do have lockable cabinets in their cells. Problems can occur, we hear, when there is any damage to the locks and there may be a delay before repairs are done. The self administering of repeat prescriptions, which raised issues in the previous year, seems to have settled down.

Health Care staff are fully involved in the preparations for the transfer of healthcare to the NHS in November 2011. The VC Chair contacted the NHS Lothian Strategic Programme Manager for initial discussion and further information on the likely impact of the changes for prisoners. Given the high number of prisoner's complaints (CP3s) on health issues, 830 in the reporting year, this is an area which the VC will be monitoring closely.

4.2 Food

The VC makes regular visits to the kitchen. The Catering Manager and his staff are always welcoming and willing to deal with food related issues which prisoners raise. There were only 4 such issues recorded this year. Some data may be missing in the transfer from paper to electronic recording early in the year. Complaints included the condition of food arriving in the halls, lactose free diets, problems with lock up bags, the sourcing and preparation of halal food and the range of meals available for Muslim prisoners in Ramadan.

There were 4 food focus groups held by kitchen staff with prisoners during the year. Staff also visited the halls regularly in response to issues raised by prisoners. With a daily budget of £2 per head to spend on prisoners' food, and often unknown prisoner numbers till late in the day, the Catering Manager and staff, assisted by prisoners, manage remarkably well.

The kitchen gained the Eat Safe award, presented by Edinburgh city council, along with a healthy living award. The Catering Manager and his staff are to be congratulated on the way they coped with the bad weather in December. The Manager spent one overnight in the prison when he could not travel home and used the time to prepare the following day's meals. Staff also coped with prolonged failure of some essential kitchen equipment, including the potato peeler and 2 of the large boilers.

4.3 Equality and Diversity

The VC recorded 7 prisoners' applications on diversity related issues, up from none recorded in the previous year. These were raised mainly by minority ethnic prisoners. Examples are the absence of an Imam for periods of the year and the delay in a re-appointment. Muslim prisoners also asked permission to conduct their own Friday prayers in the absence of an Imam. The Prison's Equality and Diversity Manager enquired about this with SPS HQ; but it was not possible.

One prisoner approached the VC about the habits of his cell mate which he found conflicted with his own hygiene practices. When VC members raised this with hall staff a cell transfer was made.

It was good to see that an ESOL tutor started work in Glenesk hall with remand prisoners for whom English is not their first language. As the last HMCIP report highlighted the lack of activities available for remand prisoners, this initiative is very welcome

One of the VC members took a special interest in the needs and conditions of foreign nationals within the prison. Extracts from his report and the presentation to VC are below in section 5.1.

The prison staff organised a number of ethnic events during the year eg curry nights, which were well received.

4.4 Education, Training and Work

Education

4.4.1 Prison library

The showcase prison library received the prestigious Libraries Change Lives award in July 2010, with a cheque for £5,000 for improvements. The award attracted considerable media attention, with coverage on the BBC and a prominent article in the Guardian newspaper. The Librarian and her library passmen are to be congratulated on the achievement. Borrowing has risen while damage to and loss of books has dropped from 80% to almost zero. Besides borrowing from a good selection of books, prisoners can browse the well stocked shelves, play games, read magazines in the calm and cheerful surroundings.

4.4.2 Clan Literacy

Less positive was the closure of the Clan literacy service during the year, when its own funding dried up. Clan has been a mainstay of the drive to tackle low levels of literacy and numeracy within the prison population, so its work is badly missed. Also missed was the new initiative during the year in which a Clan worker led a special hobbies workshop for prisoners with mental health issues. Together they produced a booklet describing their experiences of the environment. When the Clan service closed, the Education Manager offered places on current literacy classes to all the prisoners who had been on Clan's books. Some prisoners

accepted this offer; while others preferred the offer of a peer tutor. Seven new peer tutors were trained in response to the demand.

4.4.3 Carnegie College

Carnegie College staff and the prisoners are to be congratulated on 390 SQA unit passes during the year, of which 217 were in IT/Computing, 130 in Numeracy/Maths, and 43 in English /Communication. Two local recognition awards were held during the year, one of which included families for the first time

On the artistic side, 40 entries of prisoners' art work, poetry and prose were entered for the annual Koestler exhibition in June 2010. The 2011 calendar featuring prisoners' art work, produced by the Education Manager and the Art Teacher was excellent. It was disappointing that funds would only allow a small print run. This is a missed opportunity.

4.4.4 Training

The prison has a modern set of workshops, as noted in previous HMCIP reports; but not all in full use. VC members have observed empty workshops at times when we would have expected to see them occupied. On an October mid afternoon, a spot check revealed 6 empty workshops, of which two had radios and lights still switched on. The main reason for empty workshops appears to be staff shortages, rota patterns and sickness. The VC has noted improvements during the year. The prison is fortunate to have these modern workshops, the envy of other establishments, so it is good to see it being more fully used.

The prison runs a good re-start programme to prepare prisoners for release. The VC noted that due to their status, protection prisoners only attend a small proportion of the sessions available to mainstream prisoners. This is unfortunate, as they are often serving long sentences, are more vulnerable and likely to face higher level of difficulties on release. When we raised the issue, we were told that the protection prisoners could not have more sessions due to timetabling and the need to keep them separate from mainstream prisoners.

4.4.5 Work

Edinburgh prison is one of 3 SPS establishments able to offer a SVQ in laundry work. We heard from prisoners of their disappointment if they face a transfer to one of the other prisons which does not offer this qualification. As laundry is an essential service and a sound work opportunity, this is unfortunate and a missed opportunity.

During spring and summer months, the outdoor areas around the prison look good with colourful flower displays, hanging baskets and tubs. These are more visible since 2 new windows in the prison's main corridor have been opened up. The officer in charge of the farms and gardens workshop was named as outstanding student of the year at Oatridge College for his SVQ level 3 in horticulture.

Sir Jackie Stewart made two further visits to the prison this year, to promote awareness of literacy issues. He has spoken directly to the prisoners about his own experience and also opened the motor vehicle workshop.

4.5 Residential Accommodation

4.5.1 Prison numbers

The trend of high prisoner numbers continued through the summer of 2010, peaking in July with 939 prisoner and an average of 104% overcrowded. Such conditions make it especially difficult for staff and prisoners alike and mean that many prisoners miss out on education and work opportunities.

4.5.2 Facilities survey

Prison staff did a survey of communal shower facilities within the halls. As a result, grab rails and fold down seats were fitted in each set of communal showers to assist the elderly and frail prisoners.

4.5.3 Protection Prisoners' Resource Room

Some protection prisoners were able to set up a small library in an empty room in one of the halls, with the help of hall staff. This provides a much needed resource; partly for elderly prisoners, who cannot access the prisons main library easily and also a safe place for those with literacy problems to look at books and magazines and for some, to receive help from peer tutors. One prisoner, with reduced mobility, looked after the room and the resources. In October, the room was closed for health and safety reasons, as one of the windows was not fireproofed.

One of the passmen, who had been instrumental in setting up the resource room, approached the VC, concerned not only about the loss of the valuable resource: but also the uncertainty about the necessary upgrading work. We raised the matter with the hall manager and the Prison Governor and kept up the pressure over 3 months. The room finally re-opened early in the new year, much to the relief of the prisoners and the hall staff who had strongly supported the venture.

4.6 Prison estate and Administration

4.6.1 Halls

While the newest hall Ratho is in good physical condition, some of the older halls are showing their age. Staff do their best within limited resources and try to freshen the paintwork when possible.

4.6.2 Overcrowding

Overcrowding in the protection hall meant that some protection prisoners had to be housed in a non protection hall. At one PIAC (Prisoner Information Action Committee), meeting

observed by the VC Chair, these prisoners claimed that they were disadvantaged by not having the same work opportunities and restricted access to certain recreational facilities, normally available in the protection hall. Their lack of work meant they only received the reduced cell wage, although they all claimed to be willing to work. Fortunately, the situation was resolved when it became possible to house all protection prisoners in the same hall, following the transfer of male prisoners from Ratho hall to other establishments.

Some overcrowding was eased temporarily, at the end of March 2011, when the prison ceased to have under 21 remand prisoners. They are now to be held at Polmont YOI.

4.6.3 Prison grounds

While the waste management workshop do their best to keep the prison grounds clean and clear of rubbish, there is still a lot of litter, especially below cell windows. Two VC members observed the Night shift and the ground patrols and noted the efforts made to keep the grounds clean and secure from illegal items, which arrive over the prison fence. There was a problem during the year when an ambulance called to attend to an ill prisoner could not reach the prisoner's hall. The VC has been assured that this difficulty has been remedied.

4.6.4 Visitors' Shelter

In October 2010, a much needed shelter was installed outside the prison gate entrance to shield families waiting for entry to the visits room. The entry process takes time and the waiting time for visitors and children in wind and rain had been observed by HMCIP at the unannounced inspection in 2009. Unfortunately, the structure only lasted a couple of months, before it succumbed to the weight of snow and ice in the severe weather. It has been replaced now.

4.6.6 Sports facilities

The prison has well used sports facilities with outdoor astroturf football pitches, a modern multi-purpose sports hall, well equipped gym and small satellite gyms in most halls. The PE staff report an average of 1400 weekly prisoner visits to the gym.

4.7 Links Centre

4.7.1 Services for prisoners

The Links Centre continues to provide an extensive range of support services for prisoners. New initiatives this year included two smoking cessation classes, alcohol awareness courses and drug class run by Phoenix Futures. A Multi Agencies Literacy Development group was formed and Psychology staff began to work with 10 prisoners subject to Orders for Life Long Restriction.

4.7.2 Integrated Case Management (ICM)

Thanks to an awareness campaign about ICMs, family involvement in the meetings rose to 18% this year.

Section 5: Other areas reported on

5.1 Foreign National Prisoners

Bruce Logan, with a background of experience in monitoring immigration detainees, had been tasked by the VC to take a particular interest in how the prison looked after foreign national prisoners (FNPs). He gave a presentation to the VC in December, having researched the issue within the prison and with staff at Calton House. It emerged that SPS did not have a FNP-specific policy or set of protocols but treated these prisoners as part of an Equality and Diversity programme. SPS had conducted an FNP Survey in 2010 and this had demonstrated that the main issues for these prisoners were language difficulties and the absence of information in the Halls other than in English.

This was replicated at Edinburgh prison, where at any one time between 8 – 12 % of the prisoner population are foreign nationals. A large percentage of the prisoners who completed the SPS survey had a poor understanding of English, and a poor ability to speak, read and write English. This resulted in many being excluded from education, programmes and work parties. Bruce has attended the prison's Equality & Diversity group and raised these issues with the Governor who chairs the group. The group meets quarterly and has undertaken to pursue the issues with a view to ensuring that FNPs are not disadvantaged and are able to access information intelligible to them and to participate in the various activities available to mainstream prisoners.

At Reception there are peer support prisoners but no FNPs specifically. There is no FNP literature although there is a 10-language DVD for First Night in Custody. Staff in the FNIC area have a useful sheet of commonly needed words translated by a former prisoner into Polish for their use. Any translation services are provided (at substantial expense) by contractor interpreters or on the phone.

5.2 Visitor Centre

Edinburgh Prison is very fortunate to have an award winning Visitor Centre, situated just beside the prison.

As the VC's representative to the Visitor Centre, Lisa Beattie, reports that the past year has seen a significant increase in the number of visitors. Around 50,000 adults and some 15,000 children used the Visitor Centre during the year. The Centre continues to be unique as a pioneering flagship in Scotland in the service it provides. The staff have faced a number of challenges not least of which has been a substantial restructuring of roles including those of the volunteers as the number of these has reduced over a period.

In July the Manager, Anne Hill, died and as part of the restructuring Kerry Watson was appointed to the post of Centre Coordinator. She had previously been the Development Worker during a period of remarkable growth in the provision of services to support the children, families and friends of prisoners.

One such service has been the immensely successful innovation of having a case worker provided by Families Outside who has continued to be based at the Centre during the past year. There is a collaborative approach between the Case officer and the centre Coordinator which has greatly extended the level of support offered to address the often complex needs of visitors as they try to cope with the impact of having a family member in prison while also providing support to the prisoner.

In last year's report we commented on the introduction of a Play Worker and Play Development worker to address the needs of children making visits to the prison.

Unfortunately the funding for this which had been secured jointly by NHS Lothian, Families Outside, City of Edinburgh Council and SPS was not extended beyond April 2011 and the service which had been provided by Barnardos was discontinued. This was regarded as a major loss as the work has provided support to children in the Visits Room as well as during their time at the Centre. It is hoped that further funding may be secured in the future to reintroduce this very valuable and important project. At this time discussions are under way to determine the best way to use a further £7k that has been granted by the Fairer Scotland Fund towards this purpose.

The close working relationship with the FCDO and other SPS officers has continued to prosper together with the strong partnership links with other partner agencies. However, the Centre's Advisory Committee has not met this year which has been disappointing as it was a very effective vehicle for collaborative proposals and resources to be shared and the lack of this networking opportunity has been missed by its members. This has not precluded a number of support events being provided such as the successful Family Support Service, Literacy support for families and the Christmas Present Scheme.

One particularly exciting project which was first broached two years ago at the Advisory Committee has been launched this year. The Homework Club arose originally when the Family Support Group voiced their concerns about children missing out on their fathers' support for schoolwork. Working with a Literacy Tutor, the Development Worker at the Centre brought forward a proposal which has now seen prison staff, CLAN and Families Outside supporting fathers and their children in a way that has brought substantial benefits to prisoners and their families and has continued to provide literacy support to families with the benefit of funding from CLAN Edinburgh.

Similarly, this collaboration has continued to provide an important contribution to the Family Induction sessions which is directed at families as well as prisoners.

The support offered by the Visitor Centre is often providing better understanding and information of how the prison and the criminal justice process works whilst recognising that this must be presented in a way that addresses the diverse literacy levels of the visitors. To this end an evening event was held in April 2010 to demystify the ICM process and was so successful there are plans to repeat this in the future.

Having received a remarkable accolade in the form of a Butler Trust Award in 2009 the team at the Visitor Centre have not rested on their laurels. Two particularly significant innovations have taken place this year. The first has been the pioneering of a placement for a 3rd year University of Edinburgh student which was very successful. The research undertaken during this placement into bonding visits will have an impact on future visitors' better understanding of the function of these. Additionally, the staff at the Centre have benefited from the development of a Staff Training Manual produced during this placement. It was such a mutually successful exercise that the University intends to offer this to similar students each year.

Previous VC reports have noted the considerable efforts the Centre has made in collaboration with NHS Lothian to promote healthier living. Much of this has seen a major change in the kind of food offered to visitors in conjunction with information about what constitutes good nutrition. The second particularly notable achievement of the past year has been the long awaited upgrade of the tea bar to a proper café with a very popular menu of low cost healthy food.

Past aspirations to equip the café with full cooking facilities have had to be abandoned due to building constraints but the improved amenity is a tremendous success. The Salvation Army will host an official launch in August when the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill, will open the new café.

The dedication of everyone involved at the Visitor Centre and the innovative work undertaken there is remarkable. It contributes so much both to the families of prisoners as well as the potential outcomes for prisoners that it is regrettable that the Centre remains unique in Scottish Prisons. With the arrival of female prisoners in Edinburgh it is likely that we may expect further innovations at the Centre. We heartily congratulate the Centre Coordinator and her team and partners there on their very fine work. We wish them continued success in the coming year.

5.3 Internal and External Complaints Handling

The VC monitored the complaints made by prisoners through the CP system. We noted that there were a total of 2,443 CPs during the year. Complaints on health issues were the slowest to receive a response, with just over half being on time, probably due to their complicated and confidential nature. Within an average daily prisoner population of around 900, the number of complaints may not appear significant. However, a large amount of valuable staff time and resources are tied up in dealing with these.

There were a handful of prisoners' complaints which reached the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) from October 2010, when that body assumed responsibility from the Commission for Prisoner Complaints. Of these, the VC noted one complaint which had been raised by the prisoner with us on access to the Integrated Case Management (ICM) manual. We looked at the 4 complaints which were either upheld by the SPSO or where there were recommended action points for the prison. For one prisoner, it was restoration of wages. For another two prisoners there was support of their complaints as protection prisoners housed

within a non protection hall. The VC was aware of these issues when attending a PIAC meeting in one of the halls. The situation was finally resolved when all protection prisoners were housed in the same hall, following population changes within the prison and the transfer of a number of male prisoners to other jails, in preparation for the arrival of women prisoners.

5.4 Extreme winter weather

Prison staff and management coped incredibly well during the extreme winter weather. Staff went to enormous lengths to cover all the shifts and to fill in for colleagues who could not travel to work. One officer ran several miles in the snow and ice to and from the prison, while one of the unit managers brought his sleeping bag and slept on the floor in the prison overnight to fulfil his duty manager's responsibilities. The kitchen and laundry were kept open all the time but other regimes had to close for about 10 days. Supplies were interrupted but trips to local supermarkets ensured that the essentials of bread and milk were available on the worst days. The Governor, the Chief Executive of Prisons and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice personally thanked the staff for their supreme efforts.

5.5 Prison Watch Scheme.

The Prison introduced the first Prison Watch scheme in an SPS establishment in February 2011. It was launched by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, who paid tribute to the Head of Operations and his staff, along with representatives of local organisations, who were involved in its inception and operation. Within the first 5 weeks of opening seven calls were received from members of the community, with useful information.

5.6 Schools Life Time Outreach work

Officer Craig Mercer, who initiated this project, has continued to visit local secondary schools to present the awareness pack for pupils. During the year approximately 1200 pupils, from 7 secondary schools, were involved in the project.

The project is intended to deliver to secondary schools relevant themed multi agency workshops on a wide range of criminal justice issues and in doing so; raise the awareness among the young people about the causes and consequences of Crime, the effect of Anti Social Behaviour and the choices which they have in life to prevent them being caught up in the criminal justice system.

Results show that a large number of the young people involved report a positive change in their attitude and behaviour towards crime and anti social behaviour as a direct result of the intervention of the Life/Time Outreach Project during the past year alone. This builds further on similar results in the past 2 years in which the project has been delivered in 11 schools.

5.7 Listener scheme

The VC were concerned that the Listener scheme was in abeyance for almost all year. This was due to several factors, including difficulty in recruiting and retaining prisoners. By March 2011, we were pleased that two listeners had been recruited and trained and two more

were about to train. There was a protocol agreed for the movement of listeners around the prison, which now makes the service more accessible for all prisoners.

Section 6: The Work of the Visiting Committee

6.1 VC membership

Throughout the year, the VC has been under strength. Four members resigned during the year, while five new members joined the committee. Even so we recorded an increased number of visits (220) made to the prison, up from 174 in the previous year, thanks to a few members who have well exceeded the number of required visits. We had to initiate three recruitment campaigns in different Council areas, with varying degrees of success. When further vacancies occurred towards the end of the year, the three recruiting Councils agreed to pool resources for a shared advertising campaign, thus saving costs, while benefiting from a high profile advertisement.

The VC was sad to lose Daphne Sleigh, when she resigned at the end of March 2011. Daphne was a longstanding, much respected and valued VC member. She carried out all her duties with great integrity and humour. Her cheerful personality is much missed in the VC, amongst staff and prisoners. Daphne was the vice chair for a number of years and proved herself a great support to new VC members and to the VC chairs, with whom she worked.

The VC also lost the services of the longstanding VC clerk, Tom Smith, when he resigned from the post, though he remains a VC member. For several months we were without a clerk. We had hoped that Edinburgh Council would be willing to take over the clerking; but we were informed that this was not possible: partly due to their own stretched staff resources and also the level of remuneration offered by SPS. We recruited a recently retired administrator to the post; but unfortunately she had to leave after 6 months for personal reasons. Finally at the end of March we found a virtual assistant starting out in business, who is willing to take on the role, at the SPS hourly rate.

6.2 Electronic Recording and use of Sharepoint – the SPS intranet

Following a period of consultation, preparation and training with the prison's SPIN co-ordinator, all VC paperwork became fully electronic on 1 April 2010. While there are positive advantages to the use of Sharepoint and the VC is fully committed to this, we have had a number of teething problems. Access to a dedicated pc was a problem for part of the year. We had to share a terminal with the Business Improvement Manager for 3 months, while he waited for his own terminal to arrive. This was inconvenient for him and difficult for VC members. However, he was always very obliging and patient when a VC member needed to use the shared pc. There were several occasions when the system was out of action. This meant that VC members had to return to the prison at later dates to complete their work.

The main problem we encountered were significant delays in receiving electronic responses from Unit Managers, even though all of them use sharepoint routinely and had received

training on the VC recording system. The VC chair spoke to the managers personally and sent email reminders. In November 2010 a spot check found that since 1 April there had been 33 applications which required a response from unit managers. Of these, 20 were still unanswered. Fortunately, the new Governor took all this on board and introduced a system where VC applications are reviewed weekly at the managers' meeting.

In March a small group of VC members reviewed the VC section of sharepoint and have introduced some welcome refinements to the system.

6.3 New team rotas

During the year the VC decided to form rota teams and appoint team leaders to co-ordinate visits. The VC considered that there were merits of moving to a team rota system; ie more flexibility for members in visiting, more frequent contact with the prison and a more consistent approach in responding to prisoners' requests and to monitoring within the prison.

Team leaders were appointed and met together in February to agree their role and working practices, ready to start the new rotas from 1 April 2011.

6.4 Scottish Government Consultation on Independent Monitoring of Prisons

In January 2011, the Scottish Government announced a 5 week consultation period on the Independent Monitoring of Prisons. The VC responded swiftly and members made considerable efforts to attend extra meetings and gather support from other interested bodies, including over 50 prisoners, within the tight timescale. We submitted a robust response, with a range of examples of the value of the VC. It is extremely disappointing that after the flurry of activity to meet the response deadline, this has been met by a further 6 months of silence from the Scottish Government.

6.5 Summary of Issues brought to the VC

The VC dealt with 95 applications from prisoners, up from 63 applications on 88 issues, as some prisoners had raised more than one issue in their interview with a VC member. Family and visits were the highest number, followed by health related issues, inter-establishment transfers, personal property and miscellaneous matters. It is interesting to note that within the prison's CP system a different pattern emerges. The highest type of prisoner's formal complaints was on property issues, while those on visits were much less. See section 5.3

Some issues raised concerns for VC members. Examples are several applications about missing mail, especially one including money for a prisoner. These were raised with the Gate Manager and the procedures were tightened to ensure that all staff signing for mail print their names next to the signature.

There were examples of prisoners whose situation had not been fully recorded. One was a remand prisoner, who had asked to be on protection for his own security; but to no avail. When he spoke to VC members, they were able to check his situation with the hall's First Line Manager, who confirmed that the request was valid; but that the necessary paperwork

was missing. Before the VC members left the hall, his status was altered and he was informed. Another prisoner, who was on Act 2 care and suicide watch, told the VC that he was also a status 6 prisoner i.e. on permanent report for breach of prison rules for refusing to work, though he claimed he had been signed off by the prison doctor. When this was raised with the Deputy Governor, his case was reviewed and he was removed from the overlapping provisions.

6.6 Visiting Committee Statistics

	2009/10	2010/11
Recommended complement of VC members (per Rule 155)	17	17
Number of VC members at start of reporting period	17	14
Number of VC members at end of reporting period	14	15
Number of new VC members joining within the reporting period	2	5
Number of VC members leaving within the reported period	5	4
Total number of VC committee meetings during reporting period	4	5
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period	10	10
Total number of applications/complaints received	63	95
Total number of visits to the prison	174	220
G Allen (resigned December 2010)	0	4
J Balfour (new member)	0	5
F Anderson (resigned December 2010)	4	0
M Baker	10	15
L Beattie	21	11
A Evans	1	17
F Garwood	41	54
K Gunn	4	3
B Logan	23	14
P MacKenzie (resigned December 2010)	3	2
I Miller	2	4
M Comeau (new member)	0	13
W Ferguson (appointed January 2011)	0	8

R Peacock	1	14
D Sleigh (resigned March 2011)	35	36
T Smith	21	9
A McCusker (new member)	0	4
H Wotherspoon (new member)	0	7

Applications/Complaints Statistics

Subject	2009/10	2010/11
Accommodation	9	3
Diversity related	0	7
Education/Training/Work	9	7
Estate Issues (conditions)	0	4
Family/Visits	16	13
Food	6	4
Health related	14	11
Inter-establishment transfers	13	11
Personal property	7	11
Staff/Prisoner related	12	4
Miscellaneous	2	11
Missing data during changeover to electronic records		9
TOTAL	88*	95

*some of these involved more than one issue from a prisoner.

6.7 Acknowledgements

The VC would like to thank the Governor, Deputy Governor, Acting Deputy Governor, the Unit Managers, Finance and Administration Manager, Business Improvement Manager, Business Support Manager, Staff Training Manager and all the staff for their assistance and support throughout the year. A special thanks to the SPIN co-ordinator for her enormous support and patience as we adopted and adapted to electronic recording.

Fiona Garwood
 Chair
 On behalf of Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee
 August 2011

Section 7: Appendices

7.1 Training Plan 2010 - 2011

Annual Training Programme			
Induction for New Visiting Committee Members			
Training	Training Objectives	Training Provider	No. Hours
Orientation Visit	To help new members familiarise themselves with the prison	Edinburgh Visiting Committee	2 - 3 hours
Prison Induction	To provide an overview of the role and function of the prison and ensure new members are familiar with security and safety information.	Scottish Prison Service	2.5 hours
Keys Training	To understand the security issues and process for collecting and using keys throughout the prison.	Scottish Prison Service	0.5 hours
Breakaway Training	To understand basic techniques in self-defence.	Scottish Prison Service	2 hours
Foundation Training	To understand the role of VC members, SPS and the formal complaints procedure.	Association of Visiting Committees	6 hours

Development Training

Training	Training Objectives	Training Provider	No. Hours
Psychological Manipulation Training	To understand the tactics used by prisoners to manipulate staff and explain methods to counteract these actions.	Scottish Prison Service	3 hours
Suicide Risk Management	To understand the risks or threats associated with suicide and explain the methods to effectively manage these actions.	Scottish Prison Service	3 hours
Breakaway Training	To annually update basic techniques in self-defence.	Scottish Prison Service	2 hours

Continuous Professional Development Training Programme

Date	Training	Training Objectives	Training Provider	No. Hours
21/03/10	Computerised Recording	To understand the change to electronic recording and explain how to use the new electronic format.	Scottish Prison Service	1 hour
14/06/10	Mental Health Issues	To understand mental health and the stigma that surrounds it; and, increase awareness of	James Taylor	1 hour

		attitudes to mental health and illness.		
06/09/10	VC Duties	To be appraised of the range of regular VC duties to be undertaken.	Fiona Garwood.	1 hour
13/12/10	An overview of foreign nationals in prison.	To understand the issues relating to foreign nationals and the implications for the prison and VC members.	Bruce Logan	1 hour

AVC Training

03/03/10	AVC Foundation Training			6 hours
28/04/10	Chairs and Vice Chairs Training			6 hours
01/09/10	CD2 course for experienced members			6 hours

AVC Annual Meetings

1-2/10/10	Conference: Monitoring in the 21 st century, Stirling University Management Centre.			
03/11/10	Local Training Coordinators, SPS College, Polmont.			

Prison Visits

12/01/10	HMP Addiewell, West Lothian.			
11/05/10	HMP Peterhead, Aberdeenshire.			
16/11/10	HMP Greenock, Renfrewshire.			

Training Hours

Induction	Hours
Programme for new Visiting Committee members	14
Total Hours	14

Continuous Professional Development

Development Training Programme	6
2010 – 2011 Continuous professional Development	8
Total Hours	14

Continuous Training Record from 2009

MEMBER'S NAME	VC TRAINING (Local)					VC Training (National)							
	Electronic Recording	Mental Health	VC Duties	Foreign Nationals	FC/1	CD/1	CD/2	Chair Vice Chair	Training Co-ord	Clerks	Annual Conference	Prison Visits	
												Date	Prison
George Allen	22/3/10	14/06/10											
Malcolm Baker	22/03/10		06/09/10	21/3/11									
Judith Balfour			06/09/10		2/3/11								
Lisa Beattie	22/03/10	14/06/10		21/3/11	04/03/09	02/09/09							
Michael Comeau			06/09/10	21/3/11	2/3/11								
Alun Evans	22/03/10	14/06/10	06/09/10	21/3/11	03/02/10		03/09/10		03/11/10				
Walter Ferguson				21/3/11	2/3/11								
Fiona Garwood	22/03/10	14/06/10	06/09/10	21/3/11	04/03/09	02/09/09	03/09/10	28/4/10			1/10/10		
Kenneth	22/03/10		06/09/10		04/03/09		03/09/10						

Gunn	10		10		/09		/10						
Bruce Logan	22/03/10		06/09/10	21/3/11		02/09/09					1/10/10	07/09/10 16/11/10	Noran Greenock
Peter Mackenzie (Resigned)					04/03/09								
Angela McCusker			06/09/10		2/3/11								
Ian Miller	22/03/10	14/06/10	06/09/10										
David Paterson (Resigned)					04/03/09								
Rachel Peacock	22/03/10	14/06/10	06/09/10		03/02/10						1/10/10		
Anna Rayne			06/09/10										
Daphne Sleigh	22/03/10	14/06/10	06/09/10	21/3/11		02/09/09	03/09/10				1/10/10	12/01/10	Addiewell
Tom Smith	22/03/10	14/06/10	06/09/10			02/09/09							
Hayley Wotherspoon			06/09/10	21/3/11	2/3/11						1/10/10		

Training Records

MEMBER'S NAME	SPS Training					
	Prison Induction	Keys Training	Breakaway Training (Expiry Date)	Psychological Manipulation	Suicide Risk Management	Other
George Allen (Resigned)	24/05/10	19/07/10	28/05/11			
Frank Anderson (Resigned)	Yes	Yes	N/A			
Malcolm Baker	Yes	Yes	20/01/12		19/01/10	
Judith Balfour	22/06/10	22/06/10	25/06/11	07/10/10		
Lisa Beattie	Yes	Yes	29/10/11	25/03/09	1/10/10	
Michael Comeau	19/07/10	19/07/10	23/07/11		22/12/10	
Alun Evans	18/01/10	18/01/10	11/03/12	24/03/10		
Walter Ferguson	21/2/11	21/2/11	11/03/12			
Fiona Garwood	Yes	Yes	20/01/12	07/05/09	19/01/10	
Kenneth Gunn	Yes	Yes	18/02/12		19/01/10	
Bruce Logan	Yes	Yes	26/11/11	25/03/09		
Angela McCusker	19/07/10	19/07/10	13/08/11			
Ian Miller	Yes	Yes	18/2/12			
Rachel Peacock	08/02/10	08/02/10	11/03/12			
Anna Rayne	16/8/10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Daphne Sleigh	Yes	Yes	26/11/11		19/01/10	
Tom Smith	Yes	Yes	23/07/11			
Hayley Wotherspoon	19/07/10	19/07/10	24/09/11	07/10/10		

Additional Developmental Training						
	Howard League Lectures	SASO Seminars	APEX Annual Lecture	Prisoners' Question Time	Families Outside Conference	E & D Committee
Lisa Beattie					21/10/10	
Fiona Garwood	1/12/10 & 19/5/10		7/09/10	22/11/10		
Bruce Logan	19/5, 12/10 & 1/12/10	1/11/10				15/12/10
Angela McCusker	1/12/10			22/11/10		
Rachel Peacock	19/5/10 & 1/12/10					

MEMBER'S NAME	SPS Training					
	Prison Induction	Key Training	Breakaway Training (Expiry Date)	Psychological Manipulation	Suicide Risk Management	Other
George Allen (Resigned)	24/05/10	19/07/10	28/05/11			
Frank Anderson (Resigned)	Yes	Yes				
Malcolm Baker	Yes	Yes	20/01/12		19/01/10	
Judith Balfour	22/06/10	22/06/10	25/06/11	07/10/10		
Lisa Beattie	Yes	Yes	29/10/11	25/03/09		
Michael Comeau	19/07/10	19/07/10	23/07/11		22/12/10	
Alun Evans	18/01/10	18/01/10	11/03/12	24/03/10		
Walter Ferguson	21/2/11	21/2/11	11/03/12			
Fiona Garwood	Yes	Yes	20/01/12	07/05/09	19/01/10	
Kenneth Gunn	Yes	Yes	18/02/12		19/01/10	
Bruce Logan	Yes	Yes	26/11/11	25/03/09		
Angela McCusker	19/07/10	19/07/10	13/08/11			
Ian Miller	Yes	Yes	18/02/12			
Rachel Peacock	08/02/10	08/02/10	11/03/12			
Anna Rayne	16/8/10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Daphne Sleight	Yes	Yes	26/11/11		19/01/10	
Tom Smith	Yes	Yes	23/07/11			
Hayley Wotherspoon	19/07/10	19/07/10	24/09/11	07/10/10		

The Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee Business Plan 2010/2011 follows on the next 2 pages

Edinburgh Prison VC

Business Plan 2010

Overall aim:

To increase the visibility of the VC within the prison, ensure high and uniform standard of service by VC members, increase the involvement of all the members.

	Tasks	Responsibility of	Target date	
1.	Recruit new members as necessary, with VC involvement in selection process	Chair & Vice Chair	As required	✓
2.	Ensure that all new members are receive proper induction and start on rota visits with experienced members as soon as possible	LTC and experienced members	Within month of appointment	✓
3.	Ensure that all VC members are key trained (inc self defence/ breakaway) so they carry keys for visits, by June 2010	Chair & LTC	June 2010	✓
4.	Find a new local training co-ordinator and draw up Training Plan for 2010	Chair / LTC	March 2010	✓
5.	VC paperwork to become electronic by 1 April 2010	IT Support Co-ordinator & all VC members	1 April 2010	✓
6.	Members trained in and comfortable with the electronic system and sharepoint to access emails	All members & IT Support Co-ordinator	July 2010	✓

7.	Replace SPS logo on name badges with AVC logo	Chair & HR	April 2010	✓
8.	Develop more dialogue between members and a more uniform standard of service.	Chair, Vice Chair & training session	September 2010	On going
9.	Consider members taking responsibilities for specific area themes.	Members	March 2010	✓
10.	Do a skills audit to enhance the performance and effectiveness of the team	Chair / LTC	September 2010	In progress
11.	Raise the VC profile within the prison, induction, posters / leaflets in all halls and via staff and prisoner induction ? short CD / DVD (using prison resources)	Chair and Vice Chair	On going	Leaflets distributed
12.	Review VC members' activity and ensure that all are meeting their rota requirements.	Chair	June 2010 and ongoing	✓
13.	Liaise with local council officials to increase knowledge and understanding of VC role and responsibilities	Chair & Vice Chair	Dec 2010	✓
14.	Share out annual report responsibilities amongst VC members for 2010/2011 report	Chair, Clerk & members	Sept 2010	Not fully met

June 2010

Reviewed December 2010 and March 2011