

Cross-Party Group on Women, Families and Justice

Tuesday 10 December 2024 6-7.30pm (Zoom meeting)

Minute

Chair: Collette Stevenson MSP

Attended

MSPs

Collette Stevenson	MSP
Audrey Nicoll	MSP

Non-MSP Group Members and Other Attendees

Anne Pinkman	
Audrey Mitchell	Fife College, SPS
Elaine	Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs
Emma Mitchell	Midlothian Justice Service
Haydn Pasi	Sacro
Janine Bonner	Families Outside
Karen Armstrong	Families Outside
Laura McArthur	SPS
Lucy Parish	Lucy Faithfull Foundation
Marianna Marquardt	Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs
Michelle Burman	SCCJR
Nancy Loucks	Families Outside
Saffron Roberts	The Young Women's Movement
Sarah Rogers	Families Outside
Shumela Ahmed	Resilience Learning Partnership
Stephen Sandham	HMIPS
Toni Groundwater	Families Outside

Agenda Item 1

Apologies	
Rona Mackay	MSP
Helen Reilly	QNIS
Mags Higgins	Justice for Women
Briege Nugent	Researcher
Margaret Malloch	SCCJR
Kathleen Ramsey	Fife College, SPS
Kerry Knox	Families Outside
Juliet Brock	Mental Welfare Commission
Graeme Dickson	SPS
Rose McConnachie	Community Justice Scotland

Agenda item 2

Minutes of previous meeting of CPG Women, Families & Justice 10 September 2024

- Approval of minutes – proposed by Toni Groundwater and seconded by Stephen Sandham.

Agenda item 3

Stephen Sandham, HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland - Inspection reports for HMP YOI Stirling, The Liliac Centre, and The Bella Centre – contribution then discussion.

Stephen opened with the inspection report on HMP Stirling, showing a range of photographs to highlight the quality of the facilities. HMP Stirling opened in July 2023 and the inspection took place in February 2024. Of the 9 standards inspected on, 5 were found to be satisfactory and 4 to be generally acceptable (the scoring system is good, satisfactory, generally acceptable, poor). Stephen noted it was a good report, particularly considering the inspection was undertaken quite early on after the facility opened. He noted that people often look to Norway as an example of good practice but the expectation is that people will be looking to the women's estate in Scotland as an example of good practice. The report stated "The overarching impression formed by all inspectors was of an establishment with enormous potential heading in the right direction. The SPS are to be congratulated on building such an outstanding modern therapeutic establishment and the management and staff are to be commended for making confident strides towards being world leading in the care and support of vulnerable women. It is a genuinely impressive start."

The report identified 71 recommendations for improvement, 10 of which were key recommendations, and also identified 41 examples of good practice.

Good practice examples included:

- The additional support services, higher staff ratio and increase in the provision of mental health and speech and language support services in Wintergreen (Wintergreen looks after women the highest and most complex support needs).
- Admissions information was printed in 12 different languages.
- The overall ambience and design of the prison was exceptionally good and showed that SPS had listened to what women in its care wanted – one example of this was having a bathroom and not just showers available as women had indicated they would like this.
- SPS were also very good at listening to feedback from women subjected to restraints and using the Speech and Language Therapy Team to promote communication in a trauma informed way.
- There was a dedicated Support and Wellbeing Manager who chaired most case conferences and audited all paperwork and supported the team to develop consistent and compassionate practices in care.
- Mental Health Nurses attended all case conferences, shared pertinent information, and provided regular mental health support within care plans.
- Peer supporters were used to encourage women in Wintergreen to engage in activity out with the residential area.
- Similarly, peer gym buddies were used to empower women to take action to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Link Centre staff engaged with remand and short-term prisoners to develop plans for release and coordinate these with relevant agencies – this helped women's transition to the community.

Key recommendations included:

- Consider repurposing HMP Stirling to make sure that more prisoners can benefit from the therapeutic environment that it has to offer. Currently it is used for initial assessment processes and then some women are moved from the excellent facilities there to much older parts of the prison estate – probably not the best use of the facilities.

- The Scottish Government must consider how it can offer more high secure beds for women in Scotland with severe mental health issues.
- Body searches should only be used where intelligence requires it – routine body searches were being carried out which can be retraumatising for women.
- Introduce methods to restrict public observation into the prison and inhibit noise – the Segregation and Reintegration Unit has been the cause of complaints from local residents.
- Ensure a prison radio and information channel is available on the cell TV to provide up-to-date information, particularly for individuals with learning difficulties.
- Improve employment and vocational training and accreditation opportunities in line with the labour market to better meet the interests and aspirations of the prison population.
- Prioritise development and implementation of programmes and interventions to ensure that risks and needs are addressed for all categories and ages of prisoner and that women are appropriately supported to prepare for release.
- Better support for foreign nationals to make use of their 200 free minutes to support contact with family abroad.
- HMP Stirling and NHS Forth Valley to ensure that those people arriving late at the prison receive a formal health screening assessment.
- HMP Stirling and GEOAmev must facilitate patients' attendance at appointments to secondary care. Appointments to secondary care should only be cancelled due to an unforeseen and extraordinary circumstance.

Overall conclusions of report:

- HMP & YOI Stirling was still in its infancy but showed great potential to be a leading-edge facility that Scotland can be proud of.
- The new Senior Management Team were faced with some difficult challenges with the building design, regime and staffing issues
- The problems with the SRU being located in the wrong part of the prison need resolved
- There was a need to provide a fuller regime whilst tackling some of the safety related issues identified by inspectors.
- Although not specified in the inspection, HMIPS would like to see HMP & YOI Stirling considered for expansion to allow more women to experience its therapeutic environment.

Stephen then presented the findings from the inspection of the Bella Centre, again showing a range of photos to highlight the quality of the facilities. The Bella Centre is located in Dundee and opened in 2022. It houses low-supervision women and young people and consists of three 'shared houses' with capacity for 16 individuals. Stephen explained that the Community Custody Units (CCUs) have been designed to provide safe and secure accommodation, which is trauma-informed and gender-specific. The CCUs support the needs of women who would benefit from closer community contact and access to local services. Women are supported to live independently in accommodation based on a 'shared house' principle to develop a range of independent living skills, which are reflective of real life.

Of the 9 standards inspected, 8 were found to be satisfactory and 1 to be generally acceptable. The key concern raised was that some of the security and risk protocols could be inhibiting the women's successful reintegration into the community. But overall, the report found "the development of the Bella Centre represents another significant milestone on the SPS's journey towards excellence. There is much to admire about the modern, relaxed ambience created by the building, and the ethos of a trauma-informed approach, which is clearly heading toward

fruition and is testament to the vision and values of the SPS' national Strategy for Women in Custody 2021-25."

The report made 24 recommendations for improvement, four of which were key recommendations, and also identified 13 examples of good practice.

Good practice examples included:

- The ambience and design of the accommodation and central hub at Bella were of a high standard
- Bella benefits from the input of the occupational therapy service that provided a wide range of therapeutic supports for patients.
- Occupational therapy familiarisation visits were arranged for patients to support the transfer to Bella and ensure a smooth transition for patients.
- A person's medicine was reviewed before they transferred to Bella so medication was available when they arrived at Bella.
- People were encouraged to hold and manage their own medication in preparation for liberation

Four key recommendations:

- Women should only be body searched when intelligence indicates there is a need to so, in line with a trauma-informed practice.
- SPS HQ should provide and expedite the use of IT for educational purposes.
- A clearer plan for support by external partners informed by a strategic assessment of women's needs. A stakeholder forum to facilitate co-ordination of service delivery and sharing of information with partners
- Checks on emergency equipment should be carried out and consistently recorded to ensure that all equipment is within date and ready for use.

Stephen then presented the findings from the inspection of the Liliac Centre, again showing a range of photos to highlight the quality of the facilities. The Bella Centre is located in Glasgow and opened in 2022. It also houses low supervision women and young people and accommodation consists of four 'shared houses' with capacity for 24 individuals.

Of the 9 standards inspected, 1 was found to be good, and 8 to be satisfactory. The report stated: "There is no doubt that the development of the Liliac Centre and its sister centre Bella provides a powerful demonstration of intent by the SPS to deliver on the Angiolini Recommendations. There is much to admire about the modern, relaxed ambience created by the building, and the ethos of a trauma-informed approach, which is testament to the vision and values of the SPS's national Strategy for Women in Custody 2021-25. Staff were playing their part in treating women with appropriate care and respect."

The report made 22 recommendations for improvement, seven of which were key recommendations, and identified 16 examples of good practice.

Good practice examples included:

- The accommodation for women and overall design and ambience created by Liliac was of a very high standard.
- Staff were piloting a multi-agency pre-release process for short term prisoners
- SPS and prison-based social work staff worked collaboratively to ensure the meaningful participation of women and the effective delivery of Integrated Case Management.
- Women were offered the opportunity to engage with a range of supports which were subsequently available to them in the community.

- Liliás benefits from the input of the occupational therapy service that provided a wide range of therapeutic supports for patients.
- A robust liberation care planning system was in place for the Healthcare Team to contact community services with up-to-date information and support patients with arranging community follow-up appointments.
- A health and wellbeing forum was recently introduced between SPS, NHS and patients at Liliás covering local and strategic issues relating to health and wellbeing including recovery activities, life skills provision and health promotion resources available.

Key recommendations:

- Women should only be body searched when intelligence indicates there is a need to so, in line with a trauma-informed practice.
- SPS HQ should provide and expedite the use of IT for educational purposes.
- GCHSCP and Liliás staff must collaborate to ensure that patients receive all their medications in a timely manner and that these are administered within therapeutic timeframes.
- GCHSCP should ensure that patients with long-term health conditions have individualised, person-centred care plans in place.
- The Liliás Centre and SPS HQ should review the scope to allow women to go out to shop for themselves

Stephen concluded his presentation by noting that overall the inspections illustrated an impressive start for all three establishments and that they are potentially world leading. In terms of next steps, HMIPS will ask the SPS and NHS to respond on all of the recommendations and provide updates after six months and 12 months, and will continue to monitor the prison through regular monitoring visits by Independent Prison Monitors.

Discussion points raised:

Nancy Loucks noted that the reports make mention of the vision of the Angiolini Commission and asked if the report was measuring against this vision? Nancy further highlighted that Angiolini recommended 5 CCUs and asked if there was any sign of additional centres, ideally replacing women being in some of the bigger more traditional establishments?

Stephen noted that the reports did not directly measure against the Angiolini Commission vision but simply made mention of the ethos of the establishments being in line with the recommendations. He further noted that HMIPS is not aware of plans at present for SPS to build further CCUs.

Audrey Nicoll noted it was good to hear positive feedback from the inspection process. She noted concerns about the issues around patient transport and asked for further detail regarding this finding.

Stephen noted that HMIPS would be publishing a thematic review on transport the following week that will highlight the issues relating to GeoAmey. Too many people are missing important hospital appointments, family funerals and Children's Hearing meetings. The report will be quite critical.

Haydn Pasi noted that the inspection findings chime with the operational experience of the Sacro Shine service. She highlighted that HMP Stirling is currently trialling the use of Near Me video technology for virtual appointments. Haydn asked for further information in relation to the generally acceptable finding regarding community integration for HMP Stirling and further asked if the inspection processes were separate to, or in collaboration with, the SPAROW research project that is currently evaluating the women's estate?

Stephen explained this finding concerned access to programmes – the lack of access to programmes is a major stumbling block for individuals to continue on a rehabilitative journey and successful reintegration into the community. In relation to the SPAROW research project, Stephen noted that HMIPS processes are completely separate from this work.

Michele Burman also reiterated that the SPAROW project is separate to the inspection process and the project is ongoing. Michele noted that the SPS strategy for women highlights the importance of a gender specific approach and a trauma-informed approach and asked if this was a focus in the inspection?

Stephen stated that a trauma-informed approach was definitely a focus of the inspection process and that HMIPS had ensured everyone on the inspection team had undergone trauma awareness training before undertaking the inspection.

Michele asked if there were any specific examples of good practice in relation to trauma-informed work?

Stephen noted that Wintergreen had been really impressive in how much time the staff had to deal with women who had the most complex support needs and who were particularly vulnerable.

Toni Groundwater noted the importance of family contact and asked if any examples of good practice around this were highlighted in the report?

Stephen agreed about the importance of family contact and noted the availability of video visits and the provision of lovely visit areas for family visits. He said there were examples of families coming to visit the CCUs where women could bake and then share with their families. Staff were relaxed about visit times and visits often extended beyond the allocated timeslot.

Toni noted there is a need to look at how family contact and visits are considered during inspections and expressed interest in following up with Stephen and HMIPS on this issue.

Anne Pinkman noted it was good to hear of the positive inspection reports. She noted that in terms of the Angiolini Commission it was the intention that the prison population should reduce to enable all women to be accommodated within Stirling and five CCUs, yet there has been no mention of the further three being built. It would take a considerable amount of time for the further three to be built in any event and there are concerns about the women who currently continue to be required to be accommodated in conditions that are not ideal and in stark contrast to those conditions in Stirling and the CCUs. Anne stated that the CPG need to look at what is being done to reduce the numbers of women in prison, especially the numbers on remand? This was a key issue in Angiolini that needs to be addressed.

Stephen agreed that it is unfortunate that we are not yet able to have accommodation like Stirling available for all women. The facilities at Stirling are brilliant but it was only built for 100 – would it not have been better to build it for 200?

Anne further questioned whether we are now accepting that the Angiolini targets are not going to be met and we look at providing an increase in the number of prison spaces for women? She stated there is a need for the issue of women offenders to be raised in the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament.

Collette suggested it be noted as an action point for this issue to be discussed at the next CPG meeting with a view to writing to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice on the subject of women offenders.

Shumela Ahmed noted her concerns about missed medical appointments and funerals due to transport issues explaining this is traumatising for women. It is an example of how one part of the system can be working very hard to get things right and to operate in a trauma-informed way and then this work can be undone by the actions of an additional service that takes away from the good work being done. There is a need to ensure contracted service providers are also doing trauma-informed work and they should be held accountable for this.

Stephen noted that the forthcoming thematic review looking at transport will highlight that the transport system is not providing a trauma-informed approach in its service.

Nancy Loucks noted that Families Outside's board had attended an away day last year visiting Barlinnie and Lillias on the same day. It was an extraordinary contrast in the visits. Nancy noted that much of the CCUs positive atmosphere was due to staff and having the right proportion of staff to women so that staff can do meaningful work. She further noted that there are some elements of the CCU that cannot help but be a prison – for example doors to the gym and laundry are kept locked despite everyone having keys, staff uniforms can also be traumatising for women – it is not a problem to have a uniform but one that looks as it does is problematic.

Stephen noted agreement on both points. The issue of the laundry room being locked was highlighted in the report and HMIPS would agree regarding the nature of the uniform.

Sarah Rogers shared the following points from Graeme Dickson, SPS Policy Lead for the Women's Strategy who was unable to attend the meeting: 1) The SPS is working through the recommendations from HMIPS inspections from Stirling, Lillias and Bella, and the next Women's Strategy group will consider how they best monitor the impact of those recommendations and changes. 2) One of the barriers SPS is currently facing, related to the recommendations from HMPYOI Stirling around its purpose, is the high prison population, particularly the high remand population. SPS share HMIPS's position that Stirling, particularly the assessment centre facility there, can be used more effectively, however, the biggest barrier to using these spaces more effectively is the demand generated by a high prison population.

Agenda item 4

Marianna Marquardt, Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs – Navigating Impacts of Substance Use and the Justice System – contribution then discussion.

Marianna opened her presentation by providing background information on Scottish Families highlighting the range of services provided by the organisation. She noted that the justice system features in work they do to support and advocate for families particularly in relation to mental health and police, courts, etc. and that she is keen to understand more about the impacts of the prison system on joining the CPG.

Marianna provided an overview of what Scottish Families is seeing:

- Access to information – a lack of information for families about access to necessities for their loved one in prison, their access to health services, treatment, and support, information about their release, and information about welfare checks.
- Access to health – within certain prisons hearing about difficulties accessing medications from naloxone down to paracetamol, issues accessing wider support such as recovery groups or mental health support, and hearing the compounding impacts of drug use in prisons with families sharing that if a loved one wasn't using substances outside or prison they are then using them once there as they are readily available.

- Release - families are often not informed about release, last minute changes mean families are left scrambling for arrangements, release practices can put people at risk.
- Stigma - family members are isolated through compounded stigma of substance use and involvement in the justice system. The impacts of stigma go beyond hurt feelings with effects for physical and mental health, relationships and finances.

Marianna shared several case studies to highlight real-life experiences faced by families:

- Case study 1 concerned access to information: the family member received no information about her son's wellbeing – he had a history of mental health difficulties. She learned about welfare check from watching a documentary about HMP Barlinnie, following which she requested a welfare check. The response she received was positive and she was reassured about her son's wellbeing.
- Case study 2 concerned release – the family member experienced last minute changes to her loved one's release arrangements. They live in a rural area. The changes meant there was no way of arranging transport home immediately after release and the family member's loved one had to stay with a friend in Glasgow where there were concerns about easy access to substances.
- Case study 3 concerned stigma – the family member had no information about her loved one's release and found out they had been released after finding them on a park bench. Their loved one subsequently passed away following a relapse. The family member was unable to return to work due to the stigma they faced.

Following Marianna's input, the CPG heard from Elaine, a family member who shared her experiences regarding the stigma connected to addiction and the impacts on both the individual and the family members supporting them. Elaine explained that she has a family member on remand, who is a drug addict and has been in and out of prison over the years for crimes connected to drug addiction. Elaine noted her family member is currently not gaining access to the recovery café or the wellbeing sessions within the establishment because the establishment is still working a bubble system from when Covid restrictions were in place. This is impacting on people in prison being able to access support mechanisms they need for recovery.

Elaine highlighted the stigma regarding addiction noting we are not treating it as a condition but as a life choice. If we don't provide people in prison with access to things like recovery cafés and wellbeing sessions then no one is really taking notice of the impact that is having on the individual's recovery but also the impacts for families.

Elaine noted that the size of the prison population is currently a topic in the news – it would be good if something was being done around that recovery piece as a large proportion of people in prison are there due to some connection with addiction. It makes sense to deal with the root cause and rehabilitation and to provide people in prison with the support they require in order to deal with the bigger problem of the size of the prison population. Elaine noted we need to rehabilitate so people don't reoffend. We need to treat addiction as a condition and get past the stigma of addiction.

Elaine highlighted that Scotland has a very high rate of drug deaths – we need to ask where we are going wrong and what can be learned from other countries. Something needs to

change and that could start with addressing the stigma – treat addiction as a condition and not a life choice.

Collette thanked Marianna and Elaine for their inputs and noted there is a huge task to tackle the stigma.

Laura McArthur offered to link Scottish Families with the Drug and Alcohol Policy Lead at SPS.

Marianna noted that going forward Scottish Families wants to see systems of accountability for families to feedback / complain about the prison system. She explained that the right to health and the right to recovery need to be accessible for individuals and their families and noted that Scottish Families would welcome further conversations with CPG members around this.

Shumela Ahmed suggested local Alcohol and Drug Partnerships would be a good link for Scottish Families to make in this regard.

Agenda item 5

Agency updates – there was no time for agency updates. Members were invited to contact the Secretariat if they had any timely updates they wished to be shared with group members.

Agenda item 6

AOB