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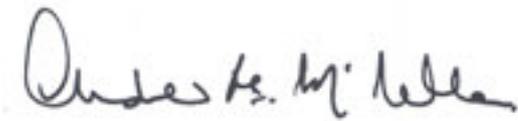
Report on HMP Aberdeen

FULL INSPECTION 6-10 OCTOBER 2008

The Scottish Ministers

In accordance with my terms of reference as Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, I forward a report of a full inspection carried out at HMP Aberdeen between 6-10 October 2008.

Twelve recommendations and a number of other points for action are made.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew R C McLellan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

ANDREW R C McLELLAN
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

December 2008

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1. PREAMBLE

1.1 This report gives evidence that five things are badly wrong at Aberdeen prison; and that there is very little that Aberdeen prison can do to make them better. Indeed the paradox of the announcement of a new prison in the North-East of Scotland to replace Aberdeen is that until these much improved conditions arrive it is likely that things will only get worse for those at present prisoners at Aberdeen.

1.2 Aberdeen is always one of the most overcrowded prisons in the country. It is never difficult to find new illustrations of the endless theme of my evils of overcrowding. One of the worst is the exercise arrangements for prisoners on protection in Aberdeen. Because there is so little room these prisoners have to walk around inside a large 'pen' for the purpose of fresh air exercise. One recommendation of this report is that this arrangement is so dreadful that it must be replaced immediately.

1.3 Hardly any prison in Scotland has a higher proportion of staff vacancies than Aberdeen has. It is this combination of high overcrowding and high staff shortage which provides unusually difficult and long-lasting problems: and it is a combination about which the prison management can do almost nothing. At the time of inspection there were 119 staff employed: the expected number is 136. Staff shortage on this scale doubles the damage done by overcrowding. So time for induction, for example, has to be squeezed into gaps in the daily regime routine.

1.4 It is very disappointing to discover how little useful work is available to prisoners day by day. This is disappointing in two contexts. On the one hand it is a clear illustration of the circumstances all over the Scottish Prison Service, where the amount of useful work has declined steadily in recent years and shows no sign of increasing. But it is particularly disappointing in the context of the report of the inspection of Aberdeen of 2004. That report said *Work experience in the joinery workshop is of a high quality and vocational training in industrial cleaning is effective. The introduction of fish-filleting training ...is an imaginative and promising development.* All of these examples have since disappeared and have not been replaced.

1.5 It is as certain as can be that an overcrowded prison where there are considerable staff shortages and little available work will hold prisoners who spend long, long hours locked inside their cells. This is exactly what happens in Aberdeen. These are also the circumstances in which illegal drug-taking may thrive.

1.6 The fifth thing that is wrong is the condition of the building itself. It is an old building which has had almost no recent investment and which is likely to receive even less in the immediate future. Many cell windows are broken; the Segregation Unit falls well below the facilities in other prisons, some prisoners live in locked dormitories; and the visit room, the replacement of which has been demanded in every single inspection report on the prison, is as bad as it ever was.

1.7 It is important to identify those who suffer most from the difficulties of this prison. Remand prisoners, particularly those under 21 years old, spend the longest time locked up: they are only out of their cells for PE or a visit or recreation, and they have no opportunity to wear their own clothes. Sex offenders have no offence-specific preparation for release, live in the worst conditions, have very little access to work, and have to take exercise in the “cages” described above. Prisoners in the Segregation Unit sleep on mattresses on concrete plinths; their windows cannot open and there is no electric power in cell. Perhaps most worrying of all, there is almost no systematic preparation for release for any prisoner: there are no programmes to address offending behaviour apart from the pilot substance misuse programme.

1.8 However, despite these very significant difficulties, there is much in this report that Aberdeen prison can be proud of. Most importantly, the prison is safe. Statistics show this; and this was the overwhelming feeling of prisoners and staff. Full credit should be given to management and staff for the atmosphere of safety despite overcrowding and staff shortages. It is particularly important in relation to the mixture of prisoners from varied backgrounds, countries and cultures within the prison.

1.9 There can be no doubt that one important factor in the safety of the prison is the good prisoner-staff relationships which exist. Reports from prisoners, the SPS prison survey and the observations of inspectors all confirm these good relationships.

1.10 The education provided in the learning centre is of a very high standard. High numbers participate; and there are some opportunities for prisoners on remand. Healthcare and addictions liaison have shown real improvement; again this is impressive in the context of overcrowding and the mix of prisoner population. PE is extremely popular; and it deserves its good reputation among prisoners. The canteen is also well organised and responsive to the needs of prisoners.

1.11 The introduction of a Police Liaison Officer has been a most fruitful initiative. The participation of this officer in the life of the prison contributes a good deal to the safety of the prison; and may also be of benefit to prisoners and to the community as prisoners are released. Links with community agencies and organisations are very well developed and imaginative.

1.12 So there are several examples of good practice in Aberdeen; yet the most urgent need is that the basic elements of work and time out of cell and decent conditions be addressed in the context of overcrowding and staff shortage.

1.13 A most disturbing part of this report is not actually about Aberdeen prison itself. The conditions for prisoners at Aberdeen Sheriff Court are disgraceful: dramatic improvement is needed immediately.

2. CONDITIONS

Outcome

Prisoners are held in conditions that provide the basic necessities of life and health, including adequate air, light, water, exercise in the fresh air, food, bedding and clothing.

2.1 Cell windows are in a poor condition; the prison is very cold; protection prisoners have limited access to exercise; the food is poor; and prisoners do not get the same prison issue clothing, including underwear, back which they handed in to the laundry. There are often shortages of prison kit.

Population

2.2 Aberdeen prison is overcrowded. It has a design capacity of 155 and is contracted to hold up to 220 prisoners. On the first day of inspection it held 264 prisoners. The average number held in 2008 was 233. Of the 264, 165 were convicted prisoners, 87 remand prisoners, four young offenders and eight young remands. Included in this were 11 long-term prisoners, 10 people awaiting deportation, 29 protection prisoners and 13 sex offenders.

Accommodation Areas

2.3 There are three accommodation areas: 'A' hall, 'B' hall and a Segregation Unit.

'A' Hall

2.4 'A' hall has three floors which have 99 cells and four dormitories. On the first day of inspection, 191 prisoners were locked up. The hall contains adult convicted, adult remand, under 21 convicted and under 21 remand prisoners. Convicted prisoners can be long or short-term, although every effort is made to transfer prisoners serving 2½ years or more. The hall also contains two groups of prisoners seeking protection: one group who have requested protection and another requiring protection due to their offence. A cell sharing risk assessment is carried out on all prisoners. 'A' hall is very complex and demanding given this prisoner mix.

2.5 Cell sharing is common in 'A' hall. All cells have a cubicle with integral sanitation and an electrical power point. The cells inspected were very clean. However, many window panes were broken or missing, resulting in the cells not being weatherproof. Some panes were replaced during the inspection. No cells have a ladder to access the top bunk and many do not have a safety rail.

2.6 The four dormitories each have six beds (three bunk beds) and at the time of inspection had four prisoners living in each one. The dormitories are cramped with little space to move around. There is no adequate storage for prisoner's belongings or enough space for a chair. Each dormitory has integral sanitation and power points. The dormitories are normally used for prisoners on protection.

2.7 All cells and dormitories have a cabinet for prisoner's belongings; however, at the time of the inspection, none of these could be locked.

2.8 The showers and ablutions areas were clean and fit for purpose. The standard of decoration and cleanliness in the communal areas is acceptable.

2.9 Recreation for mainstream prisoners takes place in the hall between 18.30hrs and 20.00hrs Monday to Friday. Protection prisoners go to 'B' hall for recreation for one hour each day.

'B' Hall

2.10 'B' hall has three floors which have 29 cells each, two anti-ligature rooms, a three bed dormitory and two four bed dormitories. It contains admissions on the ground floor and both convicted and prisoners on recall on floors two and three. On the first day of inspection, 63 prisoners were locked up. There was one prisoner in one of the anti-ligature rooms at the time of inspection.

2.11 Prisoners can progress to 'B' hall if they meet the relevant criteria. However, there is no published regime and cell sharing is common. All cells have a cubicle with integral sanitation and an electrical power point. Cells inspected were very clean. The cells do not

have a ladder to reach the top bunk and many do not have a safety rail. The dormitories are cramped with little space to move around. There is little storage for prisoners and personal cabinets cannot be locked.

2.12 There are nine showers in 'B' hall and the showers and ablutions area were clean and to an acceptable standard. The standard of decoration and cleanliness in the communal areas is acceptable.

2.13 Recreation for prisoners located on floors two and three takes place between 19.00hrs and 20.45hrs, Monday to Friday in the recreation room attached to 'B' hall. Prisoners on protection also use this area. It is equipped with a table top football game, table tennis table, two pool tables, one snooker table and some books.

Exercise Areas

2.14 There are two areas used for exercise in the fresh air. Mainstream prisoners use the astro-turf pitch at the end of 'A' hall. There is no seating available with the consequence that prisoners sit on the ground. There are jackets available for inclement weather conditions.

2.15 Prisoners in segregation have time in the fresh air in one of two exercise 'pens' next to the Segregation Unit. Protection prisoners are also required to use one of these 'pens'. The sight of between eleven and fifteen prisoners in one of these is shocking. There is not enough space for individuals to walk around comfortably or sit down and the first impression is one of people in cages. **It is recommended that the arrangements for exercise in the fresh air for protection prisoners are improved immediately.**

Catering

2.16 The kitchen employs 18-20 prisoners, with 10-15 working on any particular day, depending on staffing levels. No prisoners were studying for a qualification in catering. The kitchen itself is small but functional although it has a "make do" feel, with for example, unused chest freezers taking up space. This is despite the fact that it has recently had a partial upgrade.

2.17 The quality of the food is not good. On one day of the inspection, some lunch items were ready over one hour before they were due to be transported to the halls. Inspectors observed food being served by prisoners using their hands (albeit while wearing gloves) rather than serving spoons. Prisoners serving food did not always wear a hat or other head cover. Prisoners eat in their cells. Prisoners were extremely critical of the food.

2.18 The menu works on a four week cycle, and contains a healthy option at each serving, although one meal observed consisted of a pie, a pie or a bridie. There is also the opportunity to choose fruit. The prison tries to meet the needs of the prisoners, and all prisoners, including prisoners on remand, are able to make a choice on admission, or certainly within 24hrs. This remains an area of **good practice**. A computer system tracks who is in the prison, and who is going to court, to ensure that meals best meet need.

2.19 A food focus group had been in place but had stopped meeting. It was reinstated shortly before the inspection.

2.20 The timing of meals is as follows:-

Breakfast	This is given out at around 07.15 hrs
Lunch	11.15-11.30
Tea	16.00-16.15

2.21 The timing of meals should be reviewed.

Canteen

2.22 The arrangement for prisoners' canteen is "bag and tag", and the system works well. The small stock room has a good range of items, and prices are fair. No items of stock checked were outwith the "Best Before" date.

2.23 Prisoners also have the opportunity to buy items such as greeting cards and flowers through sundry purchases. Of particular note is the arrangement with a locally based provider of fresh fruit. The quality of this is excellent and prices are low. This is an area of **good practice**, not only in providing fresh fruit, but in developing links with the community.

2.24 A second area of note is the availability of canteen goods on reception. All prisoners have the opportunity to buy a £3 or a £5 bag of goods, to see them through the first day or so. This is an area of **good practice**.

2.25 Overall, the canteen works hard to meet the needs of its prisoners and arrangements are good.

Clothing and Laundry

2.26 The laundry employs 15 prisoners, with 10 or 12 working on any one day. No prisoners were working towards a qualification in laundry.

2.27 The laundry itself is small but seemed to be coping with the volume of clothes sent (sometimes up to 78 personal kit bags in a day, along with prison kit and bedding).

2.28 Prisoners can wear their own clothes in the halls at night and during the weekends. These can be laundered four days a week, Monday to Thursday. Prison kit is washed Monday to Friday. Mondays are therefore extremely busy as the laundry is closed over the weekend. Prisoners' own clothes are put in a kit bag and washed and dried in that bag. There is no difficulty in prisoners getting their own clothes returned.

2.29 Prison kit on the other hand is washed together. Prisoners do not get the same clothes returned, and this includes underwear and socks. Kit is swapped on a one-for-one basis, but prisoners complained that they did not have enough underwear – despite the fact that they receive a pack on reception which includes two pairs of boxer shorts and socks, along with a quilt and bedding. The issue of a kit bag on reception is an area of **good practice**.

2.30 Arrangements for receiving laundry from the halls and returning it are satisfactory. The bins used for transporting the clothes are cleaned after each dirty delivery is emptied. Gym kit, the cooks outfits and bedding are all boil-washed separately.

3. SAFETY

Outcome

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that individual prisoners are protected from harm by themselves and others.

3.1 Prisoners report feeling safe and initial risk assessments are carried out appropriately. However, the prison is very overcrowded and there is a shortage of staff. The facilities in reception are poor.

Escapes, Absconds and Physical Security

3.2 There have been no escapes or absconds since the last full inspection. The prison has a perimeter wall which is covered by CCTV and alarms. The location of the prison makes it vulnerable to illicit articles being thrown over the wall. Since the appointment of a Police Liaison Officer there has been an improvement in the sharing of community information which allows risk management plans to be formulated.

Supervision Levels

3.3 This system for allocating and reviewing supervision levels is managed by a Residential Custody Manager. Reviews take place between the Residential Custody Manager and the hall First Line Manager. Very few reviews miss the review date. Staff are aware of how to report information which may affect a prisoner's supervision level to the Intelligence Unit should the need arise. Prisoners are always informed in writing of the decision made at the Review Board.

Escort Handover Procedures

3.4 Inspectors visited the holding cells at Aberdeen Sheriff Court on the first day of inspection and found these to be wholly inadequate. One large cell held thirteen males whilst another large cell held ten women. In the cell holding the men the body odour was overpowering, and the room was stuffy and lacking ventilation. The room was littered with

empty drinks containers and other rubbish from lunchtime. The floors of both holding cells were covered in a dirty slippery film. Seating in the holding cells is bench type attached to the wall. There were not enough seats for all of the prisoners in the male cell.

3.5 The cell holding the women is a mirror image of the male cell. Some of the women were in a poor physical and emotional state, and for those who had received or were anticipating a custodial disposal it would be very late before they arrived at Cornton Vale as there are no facilities for females at Aberdeen prison.

3.6 The holding area was extremely busy and noisy with prisoners being escorted into the court and solicitors waiting to see their clients. The situation was made worse because one of the agents' visit rooms was out of use.

3.7 There are no toilet facilities within the holding cells and prisoners had to ask staff to unlock the door and escort them to one of two toilets adjacent to the cells. This added to the general noise and churn in the cells area. There is one male and one female toilet. A full door opens directly from the corridor into the toilet. A glass panel approximately nine inches square is at eye level in each door. This makes it possible for the person supervising to see inside.

3.8 It is recommended that the conditions in the holding cells at Aberdeen Sheriff Court are improved urgently.

3.9 Prisoners regularly reported that escort staff treated them well. The vehicles uplifting prisoners were clean and all had water and female hygiene packs on board. All vehicles have a safety message, although this was not always played at the start of a journey. The message itself provides no detail of what might happen in an emergency other than prisoners will receive information from Reliance staff. This safety message should provide more detail.

3.10 All prisoners leaving the prison for court knew where they were going and had some idea of how long the journey would take. Not all prisoners leaving the prison in the morning have the opportunity to have a shower. Showers are provided during recreation in the evenings, but not all prisoners receive this recreation. Prisoners should be given the opportunity to have a shower before going to court. When prisoners are leaving the prison

they are taken to reception three at a time where they are searched, have their paperwork completed and are escorted one at a time on to the vehicle. If a vehicle is taking six prisoners some can wait a significant time on the vehicle before all prisoners are on board. A more efficient way of escorting prisoners on to the vehicles should be considered.

3.11 Some prisoners leave Aberdeen for court in Lerwick and will be away from the prison overnight. These prisoners are not permitted to take clean underwear, socks or clothing. Prisoners being held overnight away from the prison should be allowed to take a change of clothing with them.

3.12 Personal Escort Record Forms are completed thoroughly, and interactions between prisoners and escort staff are appropriate. Searches are thorough and sensitive.

3.13 A recent change to the staff attendance system means that the reception closes for approximately forty-five minutes during the staff meal break at 17.30hrs. This means that escort vehicles, if they arrive during this time, have to wait until the reception re-opens. One vehicle arriving from Inverness had to wait for an hour before being able to let prisoners off. During this time there is no access to toilet facilities. The time which vehicles are required to wait during the evening staff meal time, and access to toilet facilities during this period, should be reviewed.

Admission and Induction Procedures

Reception

3.14 The reception area is bleak. There are eight small cubicles with only a wooden bench to sit on. Six of the cubicles are used to hold newly arrived prisoners. There are no communal holding rooms. The cubicles in reception are inadequate and inappropriate. **It is recommended that the cubicles in reception are discontinued.** Notices in a range of languages are displayed on the wall close to the admission desk but very little other information is displayed.

3.15 Two rooms are used to store prisoners' clothing and property. The storage area is cramped and barely able to cope with the clothing generated by the increased prisoner numbers. The store had a smell of stale clothing.

3.16 A bath and a shower are located in the reception, but neither is used. Admission prisoners do not get the opportunity to wash in the reception and may often not get the opportunity to wash until the next day. New prisoners should be allowed to shower on the day of admission.

3.17 An interview room at the rear of reception provides a quiet area for discreet interviews. Adjacent to this room is the nurse station. The communal areas in reception were clean.

3.18 Prisoners are handcuffed when they get off the escort vehicle and stand at a desk immediately inside the reception door. They are identified and their property taken from the escorting member of staff. They are then placed in one of the cubicles. Once all prisoners are off the vehicle and identified they are taken from the cubicle, one at a time, to the staff office where their details are put on the computer and they are photographed. If a prisoner is in the staff office and another prisoner is having his property and cash checked at the admission desk the details of the prisoner in the office can be heard by the prisoner at the desk. The office door should be closed when a prisoner is having his details taken.

3.19 The packages containing prisoners' property and cash are opened and checked in the presence of the prisoner who then signs his cash and property cards. Valuable property and cash are locked in a cabinet in reception until they can be taken to the office where they are stored in a locked cabinet. A cell sharing risk assessment and suicide risk assessment is carried out for all new admissions in the small interview room at the rear of reception. These interviews are carried out in privacy and staff try to make the interview as relaxed as possible.

3.20 All new remand prisoners who have cash are allowed to purchase, on reception, a £3 or £5 canteen bag. They are also allowed to purchase tobacco, cigarette papers and a lighter if they are a smoker and also put money towards their telephone account.

3.21 Prisoners who are newly convicted are allowed an advance on their wages to purchase tobacco if they wish and are also allowed to put money from their personal cash into their telephone account. All new prisoners to the establishment are given 30 pence by the prison to make an admission phone call, although this call will often not be made until some time the following day. New prisoners should be allowed to make a telephone call on the day of admission if they wish. All prisoners are examined by the nurse before being taken through to the first night cells in 'B' hall.

3.22 Prisoners who are untried and leave the prison to go to court, and then return convicted, are not given a suicide risk assessment. This should be addressed.

Induction

3.23 Five cells on the bottom floor of 'B' hall are set aside for newly admitted prisoners. Most cells are double occupancy and there is an admission pack for each prisoner which includes a duvet and cover, a pair of joggers, a sweatshirt, two sets of underwear, two sheets, one pillowcase, razor, soap, cutlery, a cup, plate and bowl. Many of the new prisoners however do not have a pillow. There is no toothpaste or toothbrush in the pack and staff reported that prisoners would be given these if they asked for them. These should be part of the admission pack.

3.24 Staff in 'B' hall provide new prisoners with "First 24 hours" information and also, time permitting, carry out the core screen assessment. This allows hall staff to very quickly get to know any concerns a new arrival may have, and identify areas of risk. The first night cells are an area of **good practice**.

3.25 Prisoners move on from the first night cells once their induction is complete, normally the next working day, although during the inspection one prisoner had been in the establishment for almost a week without receiving induction.

3.26 The national induction programme is delivered by 'B' hall staff in a group room adjacent to the recreation hall. The room is adequate for 8-10 prisoners. The programme (which lasts about one and a half hours) contains three modules, two of which are for all prisoners and one is for newly convicted prisoners. The induction programme has recently

become the responsibility of the residential staff. It used to be delivered by a dedicated induction officer in the Links Centre. One of the major problems with the new arrangement is that the programme needs to be delivered during gaps in the residential routine and this can affect the starting time. Prisoners can also be called to see the doctor and for other post admission procedures which means that they miss parts of the presentation.

3.27 Prisoners who have received modules one and two as a remand prisoner and subsequently become convicted do not receive the third module (which is designed for convicted prisoners). The situation is similar with the alerting tool for education. This situation should be addressed. Apart from the section delivered by addictions staff, the entire induction is carried out by an officer. There is no input from chaplains, healthcare or social work. Referrals are made to those service providers if a need is identified.

3.28 Induction is being squeezed into available slots between other prison routines. This does not allow for a proper emphasis on such a critical regime activity. **It is recommended that the induction programme is given a higher priority, and that it is delivered uninterrupted.**

Suicide Risk Management

3.29 In the period 2007-08, there was one suicide. In the same period, there were two attempted suicides and 67 new ACT cases. There have also been six self harm episodes. There has been an increase in the number of prisoners subject to ACT since the increase in the prison population.

3.30 Prisoners assessed as being high risk are located in a 'safer cell' in 'B' hall. There is an effort to reduce the supervision level of prisoners assessed as high risk at the earliest opportunity. There is little stimulation for these prisoners apart from a radio.

3.31 Prisoners who are untried and leave the prison to go to court, and then return convicted, are not given a suicide risk assessment.

3.32 ACT paperwork is appropriate. A FLM audits all paperwork when the prisoner is removed from ACT.

3.33 Case Conferences are attended by the prisoner, a Mental Health Nurse, a Manager, an Officer, a Social Worker (if high risk) and his family if requested by the prisoner. The Case Conferences are well managed and an effort is made to create an environment which encourages a contribution from all present.

3.34 There were two Listeners at the time of inspection. The Listener Scheme has only recently been reinvigorated, and is advertised on notice boards. Prisoners are also informed at induction of this service.

3.35 The Suicide Risk Management Group meets monthly. This is chaired by the Governor, and there is wide membership.

3.36 Ninety four percent of staff have received ACT core training, although only 39% have received the ACT refresher training. **It is recommended that the majority of staff receive ACT refresher training.**

Violence

3.37 Levels of violence are low. There were 58 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and two prisoner-on-staff assaults during 2007–2008.

3.38 There were 31 cases of prisoner removals using Control and Restraint techniques. This compares with 35 cases the year before. Paperwork completed following such incidents is appropriate. Planned removals are not videoed.

3.39 There is a clear management plan in place to prevent violence within the prison.

3.40 All prisoners have a cell sharing risk assessment undertaken on admission. These are kept on each floor within hall, and are subject to an audit and quality check.

3.41 Relationships between staff and prisoners are good.

Night Duty

3.42 The managers on night duty are allocated specifically to this post, while the officers undertake the duties on a rotational basis. This arrangement works well and the prison felt a calm and safe environment during the night. The managers are first aid trained. The night shift orders and contingency plans are current and comprehensive.

3.43 Prisoners on ACT supervision are well cared for and staff are knowledgeable on the policy. Not all night shift staff were up-to-date with their core competency training. It is important that night duty staff are trained to deal quickly and effectively with emergency situations.

3.44 The very good first night admission process is not integrated into the night shift procedures. Night duty staff should be made aware of who is in the first night cells so that they can offer additional support if necessary.

Police Liaison Officer

3.45 The Police Liaison Officer (PLO) has worked in the prison for just over three years. The post was the result of an 'Information Sharing' Pilot in 2005 between Grampian Police Force and the prison.

3.46 The role of the PLO includes the collection and dissemination of intelligence information with a view to combating drug trafficking; preventing escapes; reducing violence and self harm; assisting investigations; and detecting and preventing crime. The PLO attends the Tactical Tasking Meeting every morning. The Police Liaison Officer is an area of **good practice**.

4. RESPECT

Outcomes

Prisoners are treated with respect by prison staff.

4.1 Prisoners are treated with respect and relationships are good. Multicultural issues are dealt with appropriately.

Prisoners are treated with respect for their dignity while being escorted to and from prison, in prison and while under escort in any location.

4.2 Prisoners are treated well by Reliance Custodial Services' staff when under escort. However, the conditions in the holding rooms at Aberdeen Sheriff Court are unacceptable.

Relationships

4.3 Relationships are very positive. The 2007 Prison Survey notes that 97% of prisoners say that they get on well or very well with staff. First names are used regularly when addressing prisoners and no inappropriate behaviour was observed. Prisoners are treated well by both RCS and SPS staff.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court

4.4 The conditions in the holding rooms in Aberdeen Sheriff Court are unacceptable (see paragraphs 3.4-3.8).

Equality and Diversity

4.5 The Equality and Diversity Committee meets four times a year and the minutes indicate a wide ranging membership. There are four nominated race relations officers.

4.6 At the time of inspection there were two prisoners with mobility problems, although neither was wheelchair bound or incapable of caring for himself. Aberdeen has a high

concentration of ethnic minority prisoners: forty-four during the inspection. Prison staff have no representation from ethnic minority groups.

4.7 There were nine racial incidents reported during 2008. They had all been thoroughly and appropriately investigated.

4.8 Several of the ethnic minority prisoners spoke very little, or no, English, yet there was no evidence of regular use of on site interpreters. Staff use the telephone interpreting service when required. Non English speaking prisoners have assistance with language on admission but there is no evidence that there are regular checks on outstanding issues or concerns. **It is recommended that Management develops a policy of regular meetings with non English speaking prisoners via an interpreter.**

4.9 There is one disabled cell in the prison. However, access to certain areas of the prison is very difficult for people with mobility problems. The visits room for example can only be accessed with great difficulty. **It is recommended that the prison is made more wheelchair friendly.**

Searching

4.10 Prisoners are searched prior to all movements within the prison following intelligence, and prior to entering and leaving the visit area. There is a comprehensive local search policy in place. Prisoners are always present when cell searches are carried out.

4.11 Following visits, one in five prisoners is strip searched. All searches are conducted by an officer of the same gender, and are carried out in a manner to ensure that the prisoner's dignity is maintained.

4.12 A procedure for searching visitors is in place, and paperwork is in place to ensure that this is carried out in appropriate manner.

4.13 Drug detection dogs are deployed in the visitor area on a random basis or following intelligence.

5. CONTACT

Outcome

Good contact with family and friends is maintained.

5.1 The visits room is inadequate and there are no facilities for visitors or children; visits are difficult to book; there is no family policy; and the visits area is not wheelchair friendly.

Family Contact

5.2 The arrangements for maintaining family contact are not good.

5.3 Visits take place each weekday afternoon and last 30 minutes. Visitors did not feel that this was long enough, particularly if they had travelled significant distances. Levels of overcrowding and staffing shortages are the reasons for the visits being limited to 30 minutes. If visitors do not arrive five minutes before a visit, they are not allowed into that particular visit session.

5.4 There are no initiatives in place for enhanced visits or father-child bonding sessions. Families are invited to take part in a family induction session but there has been no uptake of this. There is no family policy in place.

5.5 There are six identified Family Contact Development Officers in place, but the role is in addition to other duties and there was little to suggest that they were able to devote much time to their FCDO duties.

5.6 Visitors spoken to were generally content with how they were treated by staff, although some said that some staff were unhelpful and could treat visitors with disdain. They also said that visits were very difficult to book: there is only one telephone number and it is usually engaged. This was confirmed by staff, and should be addressed.

The Visits Room

5.7 The visits room remains the same as described in previous inspection reports. It is small and cramped and has no facilities for children and no refreshments. The waiting room is also very small, and a television located there has not been working for some time. The facilities are clean.

Information

5.8 Information for visitors is not readily available. The sheet inviting visitors to participate in the family induction session, and which provides details of visiting times and contacts was located behind the gate. Visitors have to ask for a copy.

Communications

5.9 There are insufficient telephones for the number of prisoners living in the prison. Prisoners can send as many letters as they can afford and privileged mail was reported as being handled appropriately.

5.10 **It is recommended that the arrangements for maintaining family contact are improved.**

6. ENTITLEMENTS

Outcome

Prisoners' entitlements are accorded them in all circumstances without their facing difficulty.

6.1 Disciplinary procedures are conducted in an appropriate and fair manner; complaints forms are readily available; and privileged mail is handled appropriately.

Management of Disciplinary Procedures

6.2 The orderly room is held in a spacious office next to the Segregation Unit. The hearings are chaired by the senior manager who is the duty manager for the week. From the 1st January 2008 until the inspection there were 827 reports of which 22 were found not guilty and 33 had the case against them dismissed.

6.3 Inspectors observed a range of disciplinary hearings and found that they were handled appropriately. A copy of the Prison Rules and paper and writing material are available to prisoners at a hearing. Everyone is seated during the hearing and each prisoner is given sufficient opportunity to state his case. The reporting officer is present at the hearing only if the prisoner requests this. Once the evidence has been heard the adjudicating manager makes a decision and gives reasons for this. A study of the paperwork indicated that awards are appropriate to the offence.

6.4 Disciplinary procedures are conducted in an appropriate and fair manner.

Religious Observance

6.5 The Chaplaincy team comprises four part-time chaplains who provide a total of 24 hours per week. One chaplain provides four hours input into community issues and another provides two hours input into mental health matters within the prison. A Church of Scotland chaplain provides 10 hours and a Roman Catholic chaplain provides eight hours. The Prison Fellowship and the Salvation Army also visit the prison. An Imam visits the prison on an occasional basis.

6.6 An inter-denominational service takes place on a Sunday morning in the Multi-Faith Centre. Attendance varies but can reach 20-25. Muslim prayers take place on a Friday, also in the Multi-Faith Centre.

6.7 The Chaplaincy Team used to attend the weekly management meetings, although that has now stopped. Depending on the day, they try to attend addiction strategy meetings and health meetings. The team feels well supported by senior management.

6.8 The key work of the chaplains involves seeing prisoners on request (usually related to life problems); seeing prisoners subject to ACT2Care; and seeing prisoners in the Segregation Unit. Chaplains said that “we are doing what we can in the circumstances”, given this high turnover.

Visiting Committee

6.9 The Visiting Committee feel supported and listened to by senior management. The committee, whilst welcoming the building of a new prison in the North East, expressed concerns about the location and have been petitioning the Scottish Government for the retention of a remand facility in Aberdeen.

6.10 They reported that within Aberdeen prison sex offenders were not getting equity of access to time out of cell. Overcrowding and staff shortages were at the core of their concerns. They were positive about how effective the management and staff were at catering for a population who bring into prison a wide range of complex needs and represent a broad spectrum of ethnic backgrounds. Most of the complaints made to the Visiting Committee were about visits and more specifically the use of closed visits.

Prisoner Complaints Procedure

6.11 Prisoner complaints forms are readily available in the residential halls. However, staff try to resolve complaints before they reach the formal process, and consequently the number of formal complaints is low.

6.12 A sample of complaints forms was reviewed by Inspectors. Answers given were appropriate, although timescales were not always met.

6.13 The duty manager chairs the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) which is needs led. Membership of the ICC is extensive with representation from the majority of staff groupings within the prison.

6.14 Privileged mail is handled appropriately.

Management of Segregation

6.15 The Segregation Unit has six cells plus a 'silent cell' which is rarely used. Five of the cells have integral sanitation but the toilets are not enclosed despite the fact that prisoners eat in their cells. On the first day of the inspection there were four prisoners being held in the Segregation Unit.

6.16 There is no bed in any of the cells and prisoners are forced to sleep on a mattress laid on a raised concrete plinth. Beds should be available in all cells. Windows in the cells are in good condition but do not open to allow natural ventilation. Ventilation in all cells is mechanical and this adds to a stuffy odour. Consideration should be given to installing windows which allow natural ventilation.

6.17 None of the cells have electric power which means that prisoners have no access to a radio or a television. They have access to newspapers, time in the fresh air and to the gym. The regime is extremely basic with very little opportunity for stimulation.

6.18 The communal areas in the unit are kept clean and prisoners have daily access to a shower and a telephone. The unit is staffed by one officer who is often used to help out in other areas when there are staff shortages. This has the effect of further restricting the regime opportunities available, and particularly restricting the times at which prisoners can access the shower or the telephone.

6.19 A study of the paperwork confirmed that appropriate authority had been granted to hold prisoners in the Segregation Unit. Case conferences are held within timescales and Rule 94 applications are submitted timeously.

6.20 Senior managers regularly visit prisoners in the Segregation Unit. There is however no evidence of regular visits by the doctor. The doctor should regularly visit prisoners in the Segregation Unit as required by the Prison Rules.

7. ACTIVITIES

Outcome

Prisoners take part in activities that educate, develop skills and personal qualities and prepare them for life outside prison.

7.1 All prisoners, including those on remand, have access to very good learning opportunities. High numbers participate in the education programme. However, prisoners do not have sufficient access to opportunities to work or to gain work-related qualifications.

Context

7.2 An experienced full-time manager organises and manages activities within the learning centre in the prison. The contract for the provision of these services is held by Motherwell College. Prisoners are also able to access facilities within the Links Centre, which provide routes to informal learning, including links with Aberdeen City Council adult literacy staff. Management of the Motherwell College contract and other aspects of skills and employability is the responsibility of the Head of Prisoner Management.

Staffing and Resources

7.3 The learning centre is adequately staffed with experienced and vocationally qualified teaching staff. All teaching staff hold relevant teaching, ICT, art or literacy qualifications. The art tutor is a professional artist. Literacy support in the Links Centre is delivered by qualified literacy tutors. The same tutors are also employed by the college to work part-time in the learning centre. This is a major strength in that it ensures continuity and encouragement for learners to progress to education courses. Prisoners also benefit from onward signposting to community provision.

7.4 Accommodation in the learning centre, whilst compact, is of a good standard, clean, well maintained and appropriately furnished. Computers are adequate for the level of work on offer. An interactive whiteboard has recently been installed. Staff training in its use is imminent. Good use is made of prisoner artwork to brighten up the learning centre. Facilities for PE are of a high standard and offer an attractive learning environment with a

well presented sports hall, fitness room and separate fitness area. Fitness equipment is of a high quality.

7.5 Staffing and skill shortages are seriously restricting prisoners' access to work and vocational training opportunities. Successful programmes such as 'Storybook Dads' that were operating at the time of the previous inspection are no longer available. It is commonplace for officers to be redeployed from work parties to cover other duties.

7.6 Priority has not been given to maintaining adequate library facilities. The small facility has neither a member of staff nor a passman to oversee its use. As a result, prisoners in Aberdeen do not have access to the up-to-date library services that are enjoyed by people in the community or, indeed, by prisoners in some other prisons. The Links Centre is noisy due to the laundry operation and lacks privacy for one-to-one support.

Access to Learning, Skills and Employability

7.7 All categories of prisoners have access to learning opportunities including those on remand and on protection, and those serving short-term sentences. This is an area of **good practice**. Protection prisoners are timetabled into education provision when mainstream prisoners are at lunch. Prisoners are not financially disadvantaged by attending education in favour of a work party. Full-time learners are paid for attending education. Learning centre classes are popular and well attended.

7.8 The prison makes good use of external links to the local authority to provide additional learning support for prisoners. Literacy tutors from Aberdeen City Council deliver effective one-to-one literacy support in the Links Centre. A detailed service level agreement operates with Aberdeen City Council clearly setting out the level of support provided. Prisoners are also encouraged to access local adult learning provision on liberation.

7.9 The prison has developed good relationships with Jobcentre Plus in Aberdeen. As a result, regular Employability Days are held for prisoners to find out about local employment opportunities and to meet potential employers. A local credit union provides constructive advice to prisoners in the independent living project on managing their finances. Some prisoners have taken out membership and are now saving on a regular basis.

7.10 There is a good range of PE provision to meet the needs of all categories and ages of prisoners including yoga and exercise for the over 40s.

7.11 Prisoners do not have sufficient access to opportunities to work or to gain work-related qualifications. On one day during the inspection, only 85 of 264 prisoners were attending work parties, few of which offered opportunities for qualifications. Over the past few years the prison has been well below its targets for the number of hours prisoners spend on work skills. Currently, three prison officers are undergoing training to provide qualifying courses in laundry work for prisoners. **It is recommended that more out of cell activities, particularly work, are available.**

7.12 Learning programme opportunities are not effectively marketed in the halls. Prisoners are arriving late at morning education provision because of changes to the administration of methadone.

Assessment of Need

7.13 All new prisoners attend an induction programme on entry to the prison where learning and training opportunities are explained. An “alerting tool” is used to diagnose basic literacy and numeracy needs. All prisoners engaging in education programmes are further assessed using paper-based and online tools to establish levels of literacy and numeracy. This informs their programmes of study. Learning centre staff produce suitable individual learning plans (ILP) for all prisoners (serving more than one year) involved in learning and use these to monitor and record progress regularly.

Delivery of Learning

7.14 In the learning centre, prisoner learning is self-directed and supported by tutor assistance where required. Prisoners are engaged purposefully in developing the full range of core skills, particularly communication, numeracy and information technology. One prisoner was using a Russian language programme to gain language skills. Staff work effectively with prisoners and support them well. Prisoners hold staff in high regard and value their support.

7.15 Staff in the learning centre create a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Prisoners are noticeably well-focused on achieving their learning goals. The learning programme is

specifically designed for prisoners serving short sentences. It is much more relevant to the needs of learners than it had been at the time of the previous inspection.

7.16 In the Links Centre, staff are approachable and respond flexibly to learner needs and interests. Aberdeen City Council adult literacy tutors support individuals on a one-to-one basis. Tutors are well prepared and use a good range of approaches to effectively engage with learners.

7.17 PE staff follow an agreed syllabus for the assistant fitness instructor course. Participants regularly record their progress in an individual log book for accreditation purposes. PE staff encourage prisoners to take responsibility for their learning.

Prisoners' Learning Experiences

7.18 Most prisoners attending the learning centre value their learning and spoke positively about staff commitment. The education programme whilst limited, is based on prisoners' needs. Education classes are popular and provide opportunities for prisoners to develop new practical skills and further develop oral and written communication skills.

7.19 English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes are popular and benefit the large number of non English speaking prisoners who attend. Prisoners engaged in one-to-one literacy support in the Links Centre are better able to cope with writing and reading letters. Support is provided for prisoners with dyslexia.

7.20 The independent living course is successfully equipping prisoners with a range of practical survival skills such as cooking, budgeting and healthy living prior to liberation. High numbers of prisoners successfully completed this course in 2007.

Achievement

7.21 Most prisoners who complete programmes gain certification for their learning. Over the last year prisoners attending the learning centre had attained 158 SQA units, mainly in communication, numeracy and information technology. Students were successfully

completing the 'European Computer Driving Licence' (ECDL) award. College enrolments and prisoner learning hours (PLH) were increasing.

7.22 A report detailing learner numbers and certificates gained is submitted by the learning centre to Motherwell College on a monthly basis. Enhanced payments are made to prisoners on completion of qualifications and for attending other life skills learning courses.

7.23 Under the guidance of PE staff prisoners are successfully completing accredited awards such as the assistant fitness instructors course and Community Sports Leadership award. Both courses also include the successful completion of the 'Heart Start' qualification.

7.24 There are no formal arrangements for learning centre or prison staff to celebrate the success of prisoners through local award ceremonies. This is a missed opportunity to recognise the attainment and wider achievement of prisoners. There are too few opportunities for prisoners to gain work-related qualifications. There is no assessor in place for the assessment of industrial cleaning. As a result trainees are unable to complete the BICS qualification.

Ethos and Values

7.25 Respectful and good relationships between prisoners and staff contribute to a positive and purposeful learning environment in all areas. Prisoners value the support and opportunities they receive through learning and training opportunities.

7.26 Strong partnership working between the Links Centre and various external agencies extends the range of support services that prisoners are able to access before and after release. Prisoners access local adult learning opportunities in the Aberdeen area.

Quality Assurance

7.27 Motherwell College has made very good progress in introducing quality improvement activities within the learning centre. They have introduced a process of self-evaluation for improvement. In this way, tutors are systematically developing actions to improve the

learning experiences of prisoners. Staff have also improved access to learning and development opportunities to continuously improve their skills.

Conclusion

7.28 Prisoners enjoy and benefit from a range of purposeful activities in the learning centre and Links Centre. Appropriately qualified and approachable staff support prisoners to make suitable progress in a range of core skills. Prisoners actively engage in learning with a very purposeful atmosphere created. Good use is made of outside partners. Prisoners value the education and out of cell provision. They are not financially disadvantaged when attending education classes in preference to being part of a work party.

7.29 Work experience is limited in the range of activities on offer. Staffing and skill shortages are seriously restricting prisoners' access to work and vocational training opportunities.

Library

7.30 Books are available to prisoners in 'B' hall during recreation periods. There are also small collections of books in other areas of the prison. Library facilities have not been a priority over recent years. As a result, prisoners do not have access to up-to-date books including legal texts. Prisoners in Aberdeen have very limited access to CD or DVD collections.

Other Out of Cell Activities

7.31 The physical education facility has a good size games hall and a small cardiovascular room which feels cramped with approximately ten prisoners. PT is popular and most sessions are over-subscribed.

7.32 Limited recreation facilities are the only other out of cell activity regularly available. Many prisoners in Aberdeen spend long periods in their cells.

8. HEALTHCARE

Outcome

Healthcare is provided to the same standard as in the community outside prison, available in response to need, with a full range of preventive services, promoting continuity with health services outside prison.

8.1 Healthcare is good, particularly in the context of the complex prisoner mix and high levels of overcrowding. However, the provision of dentistry and mental health support is inadequate, and the addiction service is struggling to meet the demands caused by overcrowding and a lack of staff.

Health Services

Primary Healthcare

8.2 The healthcare nursing team consists of one clinical manager and eight nursing staff. The full complement is five practitioner nurses and three addictions nurses. There is no dedicated full-time mental health nurse. To overcome this, three of the team are also mental health trained, although there is very little time for them to deliver a mental health service. Despite being funded for three addictions nurses the majority of addictions nurse time, with the exception of the addictions nurse/coordinator role, is taken up delivering primary nursing care and ensuring the smooth running of the health centre. Due to the concentration on primary nursing care, only crisis mental health and basic addictions needs are being met. The team is supported by a pharmacy administrator who works 30 hours per week. An administrator has recently been recruited.

8.3 The nursing service is available Monday to Friday from 07.00hrs to 21.30hrs and at weekends until 17.30hrs, but this is barely meeting demand.

8.4 Medical cover is provided by Medacs. The doctor attends the prison for 20 hours per week and also provides an out of hours on call service. The doctor sees prisoners on his own, although if a prisoner wishes a nurse to be in attendance he is able to request this.

8.5 The health centre has three separate areas with the main access corridor to the residential areas running through the middle. It is always busy and noisy. Facilities comprise a dental suite, doctor's consultation room, addictions nurse office, nurse resource area, clinical managers office, and treatment area/storage/drugs dispensing facility. The pharmacy administrator works out of a large 'cupboard' and the healthcare administrator's desk sits in the middle of the thoroughfare area. The waiting room doubles as an interview room and prisoners often hover outside the doctor's room waiting to be seen because every area including the waiting room is being used. There is very little health promotion literature in the waiting area and some of the furniture is damaged. **It is recommended that the health centre is made fit for purpose.**

Referral Process

8.6 Prisoners receive a healthcare screening on admission and are seen by the doctor within 24 hours. Routine admission urinalyses is undertaken in the healthcare reception area. The door has to be kept open during the nurse assessment as there is no glass partition. Thereafter all referrals are self referrals, and prisoners are seen timeously and within the standards set by SPS.

Secondary Healthcare

8.7 A dentist and dental nurse attend the prison every two weeks from 09.00hrs to 15.00hrs. Emergency dental advice is available outwith these times. In an emergency the prison can also refer to an Emergency Dental Service. The dentist aims to see 16 prisoners on each visit. The dental room is basic but adequately equipped. It is also used by the visiting optician.

8.8 A lack of administrative support in organising sessions has exacerbated an already large waiting list. The dentist spoke of a crisis management service. Prisoners have to wait a very significant length of time to see the dentist.

8.9 **It is recommended that steps are taken to reduce the waiting times to see a dentist.**

8.10 An optician attends the prison on a regular basis, and the waiting list is minimal.

Nurse Led Services

8.11 Nursing staff deliver a bloodborne virus and harm reduction service. Prisoners are able to access harm minimisation packs: this is an area of **good practice**. Nursing staff also deliver a weekly sexual health clinic in partnership with NHS Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinic. However no proactive nurse led services are available for prisoners with conditions such as asthma, epilepsy or diabetes.

Mental Health Services

8.12 Three Consultant Psychiatrists from NHS Grampian attend the prison on a rota basis to cover fortnightly psychiatric sessions. They spoke very positively about the mental health support given to prisoners by the doctor who would only refer to them when it was absolutely necessary.

8.13 A psychiatrist attends the multidisciplinary mental health team meeting which takes place every two weeks to give ongoing supervision and support. The waiting list for assessment at the time of the inspection was ten with the longest wait being three weeks.

8.14 The psychologist has been removed from mental health work to oversee delivery of the Substance Related Offending Behaviour programme.

8.15 There is no dedicated full-time mental health nurse.

Secondary Care

8.16 Appointments for secondary care are arranged by the healthcare administrator. Since January 2008, 95 appointments have been arranged for prisoners in the community. The prisoner is informed of his appointment immediately before he has to leave the prison. This gives him no time to prepare or to freshen up.

Management of Medicines

8.17 Medications are stored as required by current legislation. Prisoners also receive medication to keep in their possession. The Pharmacy Assistant carries out “on the spot” assurance checks on medication in prisoners’ possession on a weekly basis. Prisoners who are not engaging with the medication compact are placed in the next available clinical slot for reassessment.

8.18 The Pharmacy Assistant assists the team and any visiting specialists by organising and taking prisoners’ blood samples.

Clinical Prescribing

8.19 The doctor prescribes using a harm reduction approach. The full range of clinical interventions is available in line with Healthcare Standard 10 with the exception of first night in custody medication. However, should prisoners be showing signs of severe drug or alcohol withdrawal on admission, advice will always be sought. Weekend evening supervised medication is dispersed to the prisoner, unsupervised, at 16.00hrs. This should stop.

Addictions

Strategy and Co-ordination

8.20 An Addictions Strategy Group, chaired by the Head of Prisoner Management, meets monthly. Statistical data is gathered and shared with the local Joint Alcohol and Drug Action Team (JADAT): for example on prisoners who arrive in prison on a methadone script, those starting methadone or liberated on methadone. This sharing of information is an area of **good practice**.

8.21 At the time of the last full inspection (2004) 27 prisoners (on average) were in receipt of a methadone prescription. This has increased substantially: the number receiving methadone in the prison during this inspection was 76.

8.22 The prison is very well represented in the local community at local drug meetings and forums. The Governor attends the Aberdeen JADAT and the Alcohol and Drugs Action Team (ADAT) meetings. She also chairs the Aberdeen City Criminal Justice Sub Committee. A member of Senior Management Team attends the Aberdeenshire ADAT. The prison also has an input to the local Drug Related Death Group. As a result of the evidence base that the prison has established they have recently been asked to send a representative to attend the local Substance Misuse Service Clinical Managers Meeting.

8.23 The addictions team is multidisciplinary and comprises staff from healthcare (SPS and NHS), Phoenix Futures, social work, intelligence and chaplaincy. There is no input from residential or operations staff. This should be addressed.

Prevalence Testing

8.24 Eighty five percent of prisoners in Aberdeen prison are in custody for offences related to their addiction. In 2007-08, 79% of prisoners who were randomly tested on admission to the prison tested positive for drugs. When tested randomly on liberation this reduced to 67%. This 12% reduction from reception to liberation is the lowest reduction noted in any prison in Scotland. The availability of drugs in the prison is a major issue for both prisoners and staff.

Enhanced Addictions Casework Team

8.25 The Phoenix Futures Team consists of a Team Leader, two Caseworkers, and one Administrator. At the time of inspection the team were not at full complement and had not been for a significant period of time.

8.26 Most one-to-one work is carried out in the Links Centre although there is a lack of organised discipline officer cover to ensure prisoners always arrive for appointments.

8.27 The team delivers drugs and alcohol interventions in line with the SPS/EACS Contract. However, they have not yet started to deliver the pre-release harm reduction awareness session to prisoners on remand.

9. REINTEGRATION

Outcome

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that prisoners are reintegrated safely into the community and where possible into a situation less likely to lead to further crime.

9.1 The prison has developed good relations with a wide range of community agencies. There are very good links with Jobcentre Plus and Community Employers. A pre-release programme is in place.

Integrated Case Management

9.2 Integrated Case Management (ICM) operates at Enhanced and Standard levels. The majority of prisoners are dealt with through the standard procedures. This means that every convicted prisoner has a Community Integration Plan (CIP), and for some there is the opportunity to attend a pre-release course at which there are a range of community partners who provide advice and support on release.

9.3 At the time of inspection there were 34 prisoners involved in the enhanced process and there was an average of two case conferences per month. The enhanced procedures allow all prisoners serving sentences over four years and all sex offenders serving six months or more to be involved in multi-disciplinary meetings to review progress and develop strategies to reduce the risk of re-offending and causing harm on release.

9.4 There are no staff in Aberdeen exclusively dedicated to the ICM process. A First Line Manager has responsibility for managing the ICM process as part of a range of other duties, and the co-ordinator has ICM as a secondary duty. An administrator works half of the time to support the process and like other staff in ICM has competing demands which do not always permit availability to coincide with the work flow and deadlines. Ten officers have recently been trained to undertake risk assessments with prison based social workers. This has helped improve the relationship between social work and prison staff and given a better joint focus to ICM.

9.5 Due to the demands created by overcrowding and staff shortages the time officers are allocated for conducting risk assessments and compiling reports can be extremely fragmented. There are often competing demands on staff time with priority given to the delivery of the basics such as issuing of medication, supervision of time in the fresh air, and serving food. Staff will often have to compile risk assessments or reports in one hour time slots. Such circumstances can lead to a 'piece meal' process, making accurate and quality outcomes very difficult. **It is recommended that staff are allocated reasonable time, free from other duties, to carry out the tasks associated with Integrated Case Management.**

9.6 There is no personal officer scheme in Aberdeen and as such the ICM co-ordinator meets with a prisoner immediately before his case conference. This does not meet the recommended timescale set out in the ICM manual. The prisoner is then given a copy of his dossier during the case conference. A copy of the dossier should be given to the prisoner before a case conference so that he is aware of identified issues and planned interventions.

9.7 The core screen assessment is usually carried out on the day after admission. The core screen documents are then passed by officers in 'B' hall to activities administrative staff to record any referrals on the appropriate domain on PR2. There is, however, no record of aggregated need kept and as a consequence prison management are unable to measure the effectiveness of programme provision against identified need.

9.8 Case conferences take place within the required timescales. There is an excellent attendance rate by community based social workers (100%). A family member has only been in attendance at a case conference twice between January 2008 and the time of inspection. Video conferencing has not been offered to families in an attempt to improve attendance at conferences. Minimum attendance is achieved at all case conferences.

9.9 Inspectors observed a pre-release case conference at which the prisoner, his parents, prison and community based social workers, the ICM co-ordinator and the ICM manager were present. The prisoner had an identified problem with addictions and it was surprising to note that an addictions professional was unable to attend. Everyone at the meeting was given the opportunity to make a contribution.

9.10 In addition to ICM case conferences there is a Prisoner Case Management meeting which is attended by a Unit Manager, a prison based social worker, the intelligence co-ordinator and the ICM manager. The minutes of this meeting are circulated to senior managers but are not entered on PR2. The main reason for this meeting is to examine where there may be areas of risk of harm. This could be carried out as part of the ICM process, to avoid duplication and the possibility of information being missed or not passed on.

9.11 Since the inception of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) there has been one prisoner released on level 3 (the highest level of risk) and two on level 2. The nature of the Aberdeen meetings structure means that few prisoners are referred to the establishment Risk Management Group (RMG). The RMG had only had one meeting in the eighteen months prior to the inspection. Management should review the link between ICM and the RMG.

Interventions to Address Offending Behaviour

9.12 There used to be a number of offending behaviour programmes offered, such as Cognitive Skills, Relationships, Lifeline and First Steps. Now there are only two: the Substance Related Offending Behaviour Programme (which is a pilot programme) and Alcohol Awareness.

Partner Organisations

9.13 Aberdeen engages with an extensive number of organisations which benefits both the prison and the community. There has recently been an increase in the number of community organisations wishing to work in partnership with the prison. Employability days are held every three months. The prison is also involved in fund raising activities.

9.14 A recent partnership which has been developed is with 'Community Food Initiative North East'. Initially, they held a food tasting day within the prison. Prisoners are now able to buy high quality fruit at a reasonable cost. There has been an increased demand for this service.

9.15 Overall, the prison is very effective in engaging with partner organisations in the community and this is an area of **good practice**.

Preparation for Release

9.16 Five weeks prior to liberation the prisoner's Community Integration Programme is reviewed. The opportunity to participate in a pre-release course is also given to prisoners serving over three months. Those who do not want to participate are interviewed. The course takes place in the Independent Living Unit and the content is high quality. A range of community organisations, housing providers, Grampian Fire and Rescue Services (GFRS) and Grampian Police provide input to the course. The GFRS offer a follow up safety visit to a prisoner's residence following release. The learning centre provides training in employability skills and there is also access to Jobcentre Plus and a job club. The prison has set up very positive links with employers willing to provide prisoners with employment opportunities on release.

9.17 During the pre release course prisoners also receive information on healthy eating, nutrition and basic cooking. Advice on budgeting is provided by a local credit union. Overall, the pre release course provides a good range of activities and input and is an area of **good practice**.

10. GOOD PRACTICE

10.1 All prisoners are able to choose their meals on admission, or certainly within 24 hours (paragraph 2.18).

10.2 The arrangement with a locally based provider of fresh fruit for prisoners (paragraphs 2.23 and 9.14).

10.3 The availability of bags of canteen goods on reception (paragraphs 2.24 and 3.20).

10.4 The issue of a kit bag on reception (paragraph 2.29).

10.5 The first night cells (paragraph 3.24).

10.6 The Police Liaison Officer (paragraph 3.46).

10.7 All prisoners have access to learning opportunities including those on remand and on protection and those serving short-term sentences (paragraph 7.7).

10.8 Prisoners are able to access harm minimisation packs from nursing staff (paragraph 8.11).

10.9 The sharing of information between the prison healthcare team and the local Joint Alcohol and Drug Action Team (paragraph 8.20).

10.10 The prison's effectiveness in engaging with partner organisations in the community (paragraph 9.15).

10.11 The pre release course (paragraph 9.17).

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Arrangements for exercise in the fresh air for protection prisoners should be improved immediately (paragraph 2.15).

11.2 The conditions in the holding cells at Aberdeen Sheriff Court should be improved urgently (paragraph 3.8).

11.3 The cubicles in reception should be discontinued (paragraph 3.14).

11.4 The induction programme should be given a higher priority, and be delivered uninterrupted (paragraph 3.28).

11.5 The majority of staff should receive ACT refresher training (paragraph 3.36).

11.6 Management should develop a policy of regular meetings with non-English speaking prisoners via an interpreter (paragraph 4.8).

11.7 The prison should be made more wheelchair friendly (paragraph 4.9).

11.8 The arrangements for maintaining family contact should be improved (paragraph 5.10).

11.9 More out of cell activities, particularly work, should be available (paragraphs 7.11 and 7.32).

11.10 The health centre should be made fit for purpose (paragraph 8.5).

11.11 Steps should be taken to reduce the waiting times to see a dentist (paragraph 8.9).

11.12 Staff should be allocated reasonable time, free from other duties, to carry out the tasks associated with Integrated Case Management (paragraph 9.5).

12. ACTION POINTS

- 12.1 Broken window panes in cells should be replaced (paragraph 2.5).
- 12.2 Bunk beds in cells should have ladders and safety rails (paragraphs 2.5 and 2.11).
- 12.3 All prisoners should have a lockable cabinet (paragraphs 2.7 and 2.11).
- 12.4 'B' hall should have a published regime (paragraph 2.11).
- 12.5 Prisoners working in the kitchen should be able to study for a qualification in catering (paragraph 2.16).
- 12.6 The quality of the food should be improved (paragraph 2.17).
- 12.7 The timing of meals should be reviewed (paragraph 2.21).
- 12.8 When prisoners send their prison kit to the laundry, they should get the same items back (paragraph 2.29).
- 12.9 Prisoners should be provided with sufficient underwear of their own over the course of their sentence (paragraph 2.29).
- 12.10 The safety message played in the escort vehicles should provide more detail (paragraph 3.9).
- 12.11 Prisoners should have the opportunity to have a shower before going to court (paragraph 3.10).
- 12.12 A more efficient way of escorting prisoners on to the vehicles going to court should be considered (paragraph 3.10).
- 12.13 Prisoners being held overnight away from the prison should be allowed to take a change of clothing with them (paragraph 3.11).

12.14 The time which escort vehicles are required to wait during the evening staff meal time, and access to toilet facilities during this period, should be reviewed (paragraph 3.13).

12.15 The store room in reception should be refreshed (paragraph 3.15).

12.16 New prisoners should be allowed to shower on the day of admission (paragraph 3.16).

12.17 The office door in reception should be closed when a prisoner is having his details taken (paragraph 3.18).

12.18 New prisoners should be allowed to make a telephone call on the day of admission if they wish (paragraphs 3.21).

12.19 Prisoners who are untried and leave the prison to go to court, and then return convicted, should be given a suicide risk assessment (paragraphs 3.22 and 3.31).

12.20 A pillow, a toothbrush and tube of toothpaste should be included in the admission pack (paragraph 3.23).

12.21 Planned Control and Restraint removals should be videoed (paragraph 3.38).

12.22 Night duty staff should be trained to deal quickly and effectively with emergency situations (paragraph 3.43).

12.23 Night duty staff should be made aware of who is in the first night cells (paragraph 3.44).

12.24 The toilets in the cells in the Segregation Unit should be enclosed (paragraph 6.15).

12.25 Beds should be available in all cells in the Segregation Unit (paragraph 6.16).

12.26 Consideration should be given to installing windows which allow natural ventilation in the cells in the Segregation Unit (paragraph 6.16).

- 12.27 The doctor should regularly visit prisoners in the Segregation Unit (paragraph 6.20).
- 12.28 Staffing and skills shortages should not restrict prisoners' access to work and vocational training opportunities (paragraph 7.5).
- 12.29 Prisoners should have better access to library facilities (paragraphs 7.6 and 7.30).
- 12.30 Prisoners should have sufficient access to opportunities to work or to gain work-related qualifications (paragraph 7.11).
- 12.31 Learning opportunities should be more effectively marketed in the halls (paragraph 7.12).
- 12.32 Prisoners should not arrive late at morning education provision because of changes to the administration of methadone (paragraph 7.12).
- 12.33 Formal arrangements should be put in place for learning centre or prison staff to celebrate the success of prisoners through local award ceremonies (paragraph 7.24).
- 12.34 There should be a dedicated full-time mental health nurse in post (paragraph 8.15).
- 12.35 Prisoners should be given time to freshen up before attending a healthcare appointment in the community (paragraph 8.16).
- 12.36 The practice of weekend evening supervised medication being dispensed to the prisoner, unsupervised, at 16.00hrs should stop (paragraph 8.19).
- 12.37 The addictions team should have an input from residential and operations staff (paragraph 8.23).
- 12.38 The availability of drugs within the prison should be addressed (paragraph 8.24).
- 12.39 Smoking cessation support should be introduced (paragraph 8.28).

12.40 A copy of the prisoner's dossier should be given to the prisoner before an ICM case conference (paragraph 9.6).

12.41 A record of aggregated need should be kept following the core screen assessment (paragraph 9.7).

12.42 Consideration should be given to bringing the Prisoner Case Management meeting into the ICM process (paragraph 9.10).

12.43 Management should review the link between Integrated Case Management and the Risk Management Group (paragraph 9.11).

Sources of Evidence

Written material and statistics received from the prison prior to Inspection

Prison's self-assessment

Governor's briefing

SPS Prisoner Survey

Prison Records

Prison background material

Discussions with prisoners

Discussions with prisoners' families

Focus groups with prisoners

Interviews with prisoners

Interviews with prison staff

Focus groups with staff

Observations

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