

Scottish Parliament
Cross Party Group on Women's Justice
Wednesday 16th January 2019

Attendees

Name	Designation
Rona McKay	MSP
Maurice Corry	MSP
Liam McArthur	MSP
Richard Lyle	MSP
Danielle Johnson	MSP
Wendy Sinclair-Gieben	Chief Inspector of Scottish Prisons
Amy Callaghan	Office of Rona McKay MSP
Alicia Turner	Office of Daniel Johnson MSP
Lily Humphreys	Office of Liam McArthur MSP
Adel Hill	Access to Industry
Rose McConnachie	Community Justice Scotland
Mags Higgins	Justice Watch
Deborah Russo	Consultant to the Prisoner's advice service, Solicitor and researcher
Tracey Thompson	Early Years Scotland
Clare Hendry	Early Years Scotland
Carol Dearie	St. Mary's Kenmure, secure facility
Margaret Malloch	Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research
Lorraine Gillies	Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN)
Paula Mitchell	Women for Justice, Scotland

Apologies

Rhoda Grant, MSP

Mary Fee, MSP

Anne Pinkman, Prison Reform Trust

Pam Hunter, CEO Say-Women, Glasgow

Yvonne Robson, SACRO

Linda Kincaid, Women's Strategy Team Cornton vale Prison

Erin Gallagher, Women for Independence

Eilidh Dickson, Engender

Maggie Mellon, Social Work Consultant

Karyn Mabon, Women for Justice, Scotland

Nancy Loucks, Chief Executive Families Outside

Welcome	Outcomes/Actions
<p>RM Welcomed everyone to the meeting and offered some apologies. PM also offered a list of apologies. (See page 1)</p>	
<p>RM handed over to WSG, the speaker.</p>	<p>Main body of presentation NB The full slides from WSG's presentation are at the end of these minutes.</p>
<p>Main Speaker</p>	
<p>WSG The work of the Scottish Prisons Inspection team is underpinned by OPCAT (The Optional Protocol to The UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or degrading Treatment or Punishment.) The SPS are asked to meet nine standards and eighty- one quality indicators.</p> <p>When a Prison is being inspected a team of nineteen people undertake the assessment.</p> <p>In Scotland 20% of the female population is on remand. However, Wales has more women in Prison than Scotland. Many of the female prisoners have mental health challenges and are serving time for violent crimes (27%) and not just low- level crimes such as shoplifting and crimes of dishonesty (21%) (Scottish Government figures 2015)</p> <p>There is a Mental Health Strategy (Scottish Government 2017-2027) based on equivalence in relation to the Prison population. If a member of the general public can access a Mental Health service, then the same should be available to prisoners. However only 1 in 3 people who would benefit from treatment for a mental illness currently receive help.</p> <p>In a 2018 survey the SPS (Scottish Prison Service) states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *96% of female Prisoners reported to have significant problems with drugs and alcohol *50% stated that they had experienced abusive and violent relationships * 73% stated they had experienced sexual abuse <p>WSG recognised the need for a health needs assessment as a baseline for all Prisoners on reception to the Prison Estate.</p> <p>She recognised the good work carried out in Cornton Vale and Polmont Prisons but noticed that Grampian found it difficult to recruit Mental Health Staff.</p> <p>Women in Prison have poorer Mental Health outcomes than women in general.</p>	

<p>Main Speaker</p>	
<p>WSG</p> <p>There are 400 prisoners in the Female Prison Estate. The new places will hold 180 in total.</p> <p>It was noted that the nature and quality of the relationships between Prisoners and staff have an impact on the Mental Health of the Prisoners. Women Prisoners in Greenock noted a good quality of relationship with staff.</p> <p>Research suggests that a gender specific approach is needed to achieve appropriate outcomes for women Prisoners. “This may take the form of gender-specific assessment/classification methods, staff training and female staffing” (Slide 11)</p> <p>The Joint Health and Justice Collaboration Improvement Board are focusing on 3 main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When people in mental distress present to the Police • Health and Social care In Prisons • Health and forensic medical services for victims of rape and sexual assault <p>(Slide 12)</p> <p>There is no sub -acute Unit for women with Mental Health Problems. Women are currently sent to Rampton, Nottinghamshire, England.</p> <p>Operational staff in Prison sometimes feel unsure of how to deal with Mental Health and gender specific issues. Women on remand are not required to work and often stay in their cells for long periods of time therefore self- isolating with an increased risk of decline in their Mental Health.</p> <p>In 2016 the staff at Ross House in Cornton vale were commended for their work.</p> <p>Suggestions for the way forward</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There should be a gender specific needs assessment for the whole of Scotland, with all women being assessed in Cornton Vale Prison. 2. All information about a Prisoner should be disseminated. There should be a referral pathway. (In England a hand- held device is used to access up to date information on any Prisoner, especially useful for health needs from Court onwards.) 3. Enhanced clinical support. (Epidemiological issue relating to marginalised people.) 	

Main Speaker	
<p>WSG</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Review alternative models of Mental Health care, e.g. CBT, use of in cell telephones so that Prisoners can call an inmate staffed helpline or give access to an outside 24 hour helpline, during the night. (Tel numbers are pre-set on the phones and open access is withheld.) 5. Increased advocacy. 6. Greater use of the presumption against short sentencing. 7. Use of a half- way house for those that need it. Structured living in supported accommodation. 8. Reduce re- traumatised. If possible, get rid of strip searching. 	
Question and answers session	
<p>RM Gave a vote of thanks and asked LM if he wished to comment as he needed to leave.</p> <p>LM He would like to see greater confidence in Community alternatives if that proves acceptable.</p> <p>MC Agreed that we need to look at in cell technology.</p> <p>WSG Violence can occur at the queue for the phone. There could be an important family event and time is running out prior to lock up or folks are jostled in the line and miss their turn for the phone. It can lead to problems.</p> <p>MC Noted problems with welfare cabins in Afghanistan, where some were trashed.</p> <p>WSG Has knowledge of a prison where they use an on-duty inmate helpline or restricted access to computing to give privacy. Some Prisoners can then continue with their studies in the evening and this stops boredom and reduces frustration.</p> <p>MC Noted that the supported self- care units outside the main perimeter of Cornton Vale Prison were a huge success.</p> <p>WSG Noted that there were similar units in Glasgow and Dundee and with the new CCU's (Community Custodial Units)</p> <p>AH Would like to see greater sharing of data in order to help client group released from Prison and information used to settle them quicker and meet their needs in their local community.</p> <p>WSG In England there is a Prisoner Escort record which is electronic.</p> <p>LH Asked if there was any data sharing in general.</p> <p>WSG That the SPS and the NHS share information within multidisciplinary teams where necessary.</p> <p>CD Was shocked by some of the statistics. She has worked in secure care for 27years. There are Mental Health issues for those in secure care and in the hearing system. Some of the client group within care have suffered sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Many are LAC (Looked after children) by the local authority. There needs to be gender specific risk assessments. CD shared a live story of a young person whose needs would be best met in secure care but had been sent to a young offender's institution that day via the court system.</p>	

Question and answer session	
<p>WSG People with unmet wellbeing needs can sometimes end up being incarcerated.</p> <p>CD Noted that new research shows that women need emotion focused relational therapy and not CBT as women work with feeling then thinking.</p> <p>LG Wondered what the public would think of computers in the cells. There is a gulf between what seems possible within the group and how to outreach these ideas to the general public. How to take the public along with us.</p> <p>LG Older people will find the idea of in cell phones and computers very difficult.</p> <p>WSG Suggested that we take the angle of making people into better citizens.</p> <p>RMcC Noted that the issue was not binary and that some people are victims and perpetrators. She also agreed that we need to tell people's stories in order to take the general public along with us.</p> <p>RM Was surprised to note that many women were in Prison for serious offences and not minor offences such as shoplifting.</p> <p>RL Suggested improved training for Sheriffs, Judges and Politicians in these matters.</p> <p>CD Spoke of the results of a focus group with young females. She asked the young women, what do you need? Answer: "We need hope" One young woman said, "The loss of liberty is better than my freedom." CD challenged the group and asked," How do we instil hope?"</p> <p>MM Would like to see full usage of the presumption against short sentences and a full measure of the use of CCU's.</p> <p>AH Outlined the need for people in Prisons and secure units to have access to digital literacy as technology moves so fast that if they don't keep up when they are inside then they suffer in the job market when they come out.</p> <p>RM Stated that the Justice Minister, Humza Yousaf, is suggesting radical measures in order to reduce the Prison population. He has set aside £100 million for CJSW (Criminal Justice Social Work). As a system the Scottish Government are looking at alternatives to custody. As a country RM believes we are moving in the right direction.</p> <p>WSG Believes that Scotland is doing very well regarding innovation in the Justice system as opposed to what has not happened in England. She lays this at the steady handling from the last two Justice Secretaries. She believes that Scotland has an enlightened approach.</p> <p>RM What about strip searches? Does the legislation need changed?</p> <p>CH We don't use strip searches with young people.</p> <p>WSG There are almost no people found with contraband during strip searching.</p>	

Question and answer session	
<p>CH We don't use it in searching young people.</p> <p>WSG We should stop it now and deal with the legislation.</p> <p>MH Katie Allan, it happened to her.</p> <p>CH Explained more about a current case involving a young person.</p> <p>RL Suggested a whole system review including Politicians and Judiciary.</p> <p>WSG I am not sure that children should be in Polmont.</p> <p>AH Introduced the concept of rounded boundaries. If a young person is in unit then they should be allowed to stay on. The young person needs continuity of care.</p> <p>WSG Rossie Young People's Trust is a success story. I knew of one young man who didn't want to leave. He was heading into homeless accommodation upon release.</p> <p>RM What about the use of remand. Any comments.</p> <p>WSG We need an enquiry into remand. There is not enough time to do very much. Sometimes it is only 3 to 4 weeks. However, we could offer some general life skills or counselling.</p> <p>RMcC We need some joined up thinking.</p> <p>RM Regarding the National Secure adult impatient service. Are people assessed in a different place?</p> <p>WSG The National Service can act as an Advisory service and don't have to see the person face to face.</p> <p>CD Regarding young people, Assessment is being explored. Assessment should be somewhere else and not in the local Units, so that time is not lost with the young person.</p> <p>WSG Does the Forensic network tackle Prisons?</p> <p>CD It should do but there are cost implications.</p>	
<p>RM Offered a vote of thanks to WSG and outlined that she would draw together a final report highlighting pertinent topics for dissemination from the CPG, which would include women's Mental Health. She asked for other pertinent topics that might be included in a report which would then be disseminated to interested parties. RM also suggested that we might invite the Scottish Government Minister for Mental Health to talk to the group.</p> <p>WSG Noted that a Mental Health review of Polmont will be investigated.</p>	
<p>Minutes from previous meeting held on Wednesday 31st October</p>	<p>Proposed by RL Seconded by MH</p>
<p>AOCB</p>	
<p>RL Suggested that we take time at the start of each meeting to listen to individual members of the group and to hear about their work and their challenges. It was decided that we would invite 2 members per session to take 10 minutes each at the beginning of each meeting to undertake this task.</p> <p>RMcC Offered to bring the Second Chancers Exhibition into the Scottish Parliament.</p> <p>RM Welcomed RMcC's offer and details are to be arranged.</p>	

AOCB	
<p>M Mellon sent a request via e- mail to investigate the Topic of Transgender staff and inmates in Prisons/secure Units.</p> <p>MM suggested that we invite someone from Housing First to talk as many of the issues are housing related.</p> <p>CD Would like to see gender on the Agenda. (Maggie Mellon?)</p> <p>RM There seems to be a problem when people are leaving custody. (The joint Boards seem to hold much power.)</p> <p>CD Would like to see centrally funded places for Secure Units and not funded by Local Councils. It costs £400 per week(?) to house a Young person in Polmont Young Offenders and £4000 per week (?) to house a young person in a secure Unit.</p> <p>RM Should we highlight the remand for Young People, the budget, before our group report?</p> <p>CD Yes.</p> <p>MM Suggested that we don't look just within the system for answers when the issues are much wider.</p> <p>RMcC Would like a focus on diversion from prosecution.</p> <p>DR Would like a focus on women serving long sentences.</p> <p>RM Wondered if we need to change the Legislation on strip searching.</p> <p>RMcM Is there a body scanner?</p> <p>RM Yes, it is a chair and you sit in it to be scanned. RM then thanked all the group for attending and closed the meeting.</p>	
<p>The meetings for 2019 are as follows:</p> <p>Wednesday May 15th</p> <p>Wednesday September 25th</p> <p>Wednesday December 18th</p> <p>Each meeting starts at 6pm and ends at 8pm.</p>	