

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

Social Work Committee : 24th August, 1999.	Subject : Social Work Services at Shotts Prison
From : Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work Prepared by : Jim Scullion, Co-ordinator, Criminal Justice	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to :

- Inform the Committee of the work of the Social Work Unit at the Shotts Prison complex in relation to inspection reports undertaken by the Prisons Inspectorate at HMP Shotts and at the National Induction Centre.
- Seek approval for proposed changes in the Social Work Unit.

2. BACKGROUND

The Social Work Unit provides services to a challenging client group. It provides social work services to three prison establishments within the complex.

These are :

- HMP Shotts - the largest unit accommodating long term prisoners sentenced to imprisonment of four years and over.
- The National Induction Centre - accommodating prisoners sentenced to 12 years or more for the first 6 months of their sentence. The unit prepares prisoners for their long stay in custody.
- The Shotts Unit - a small unit for long term prisoners experiencing difficulty in mainstream units.

The social work task is to help the prisoner serve his sentence in a positive manner, maintain contact and the relationship with his family and community, and to assist with preparation for liberation. It is critical to provide the opportunity for prisoners to address their offending behaviour. Major issues for many of the prison's population are substance misuse and difficulty in coping with the demands of long term custody

Inspections of prisons are undertaken on a regular basis by the Prisons Inspectorate. These include an examination of services purchased by the prison. This includes social work services which are purchased by the prison from North Lanarkshire Social Work Department.

In the past year, inspections have been undertaken in relation to HMP Shotts and the National Induction Centre.

3. RESULT OF INSPECTIONS

Comment on the provision of social work services in the prisons was generally positive, with recommendations made for the revision of some practice and structural arrangements.

It was clear from the reports that the Social Work Unit had established good working relationships with Scottish Prison Service staff and that practice was clearly part of the multi disciplinary approach to prisoner management. Positive comment was made regarding work undertaken in HMP Shotts, providing support for vulnerable prisoners, and in the part played by social work in the establishment of the specialist addiction unit. In the National Induction Centre, comment was made on the social work contribution to prisoner management.

The addiction unit in HMP Shotts was opened in 1997 to streamline addiction support, an addiction worker from the Social Work Unit working jointly with Scottish Prison Service staff. It was recommended, however, that the work of the unit be strengthened, and subsequent discussion between Social Work and the Prison Governor has led to the conclusion that this will be achieved by the regrading of the addiction post in the Social Work Unit and redefinition of the role to play a greater part in providing training and guidance to the Scottish Prison Service staff involved. It is proposed that the post be regraded from the current grade of AP 3/4 and retitled Senior Project Worker (Addiction) graded AP 4/5. The post is currently vacant following the transfer of the postholder to a community based addiction post.

The tasks to be undertaken by the Senior Project Worker (Addiction) will be consistent with posts of the same title and grade in community based addiction projects. The postholder will assume key responsibility for the development of a range of intervention strategies which will address problems of addiction, for the day to day co-ordination of work within the addiction unit, offering support, guidance and expertise to the Scottish Prison Service staff who work in the unit, for developing and contributing to multi-disciplinary training within the prison, and for the production of monitoring information for both the Social Work Department and Governor of the prison. This work will support arrangements for prisoners' release to the community.

The current post is jointly funded by the Social Work Department, Lanarkshire Health Board and the Scottish Prison Service. The Scottish Prison Service has agreed to meet the additional costs of re-grading this post. There will be no cost to North Lanarkshire.

The other main recommendation made by the Prisons Inspectorate was to define more clearly work undertaken in HMP Shotts in relation to life prisoners. A great deal of work is undertaken with life prisoners, both during their stay and in preparation for release, but this has often been incorporated into work with other groups. The Inspectors were keen to see work defined exclusively for life prisoners, to ensure clarity of practice and monitoring arrangements for this group. This work has now been redefined by Social Work and the Prison Governor and changes implemented.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to -

- Note the results of the Inspections of HMP Shotts and the National Induction Centre in relation to the services provided by North Lanarkshire.
- Note the changes made to practice and monitoring arrangements in relation to work undertaken with life prisoners.
- Approve the re-grading of the Addiction Worker post at Shotts Prison.
- Remit to the Personnel Services Committee for their interest and consideration.



Jim Dickie

Director of Social Work

27th July 1999.

(For further information on this report contact Jim Scullion, Co-ordinator, Criminal Justice - Telephone 01698 332040).