

REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee Operations and Services Sub Committee	Subject : Social Work Units in Prisons within North Lanarkshire : Management Plans
FROM : Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE : December 12th 1996	
REF:	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to :

- Inform the Committee of arrangements for the delivery of Social Work services to prison establishments, and to seek approval for the arrangements proposed for the year 1997 / 98, for those prisons located within North Lanarkshire.

2. BACKGROUND

Social work services within prisons have existed since the nineteenth century. Since the introduction of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, services have been the responsibility of Social Work Departments within Local Authorities.

In the past few years, the role of social work staff within prisons has been gradually changing, with the speed of change accelerating. Until recently, Social Work provided all welfare services to prisoners, alongside services required in relation to the discharge of prisoners on statutory orders, and those designed to help prisoners address their offending behaviour e.g. groupwork programmes. The Scottish Prison Service now wish to provide welfare services, and those which tackle offending behaviour themselves, and the role of social workers within prisons is changing from that of service provider to prisoners to that of providing a consultancy service to the Scottish Prison Service staff, to enable them to take over these responsibilities. The role of consultant in this respect involves the provision of advice, support and training to Scottish Prison Service staff to enable them to undertake tasks themselves, with the social worker only called to assist if unusual or complex issues arise.

It should be noted by the Committee that the changes noted above have not been fully discussed with COSLA or the Association of Directors of Social Work at national level. Rather, they are being negotiated on the basis of work within individual prisons. There is considerable disquiet within the Association of Directors of Social Work over this lack of consultation, and efforts are currently being made by the Association to pursue this issue.

The cost of Social Work services in prisons is fully funded by the Scottish Prison Service. Control of budgets has now been decentralised to prison governors, who will negotiate the purchase of services from any source they deem appropriate. There is no requirement on the Governor to purchase services from the Local Authority within whose area the prison lies. The speed of change has varied from prison to prison, depending on the views of the individual governor, and the characteristics of the individual prison.

There are four prisons within the area of North Lanarkshire. These are :

- **Longriggend Remand Unit** - A unit for 202 male remand prisoners, under the age of 21, from predominantly the West of Scotland. The prison also caters for 14 - 15 year olds placed on prison remand, and for 24 adult men. The average daily population of offenders under the age of 16 is 2 - 3.

Staffing for the Social Work Unit consists of 1 Senior Social Worker, 1 Social Worker, and a part time Addiction Worker (17.5 Hours). Clerical support is provided by the Scottish Prison Service.

The cost of the Social Work service in Longriggend for 1997 / 98 will be £63,539.

- **Shotts Prison** - A maximum security unit for 463 long term prisoners.

Staffing for the Social Work Unit consists of 1 Senior Social Worker, 5 Social Workers, 1 Addiction Worker, and 2 Clerical Staff.

The cost of the Social Work service in Shotts for 1997 / 98 will be £181,729.

- **National Induction Centre** - A unit, capacity 47, opened in 1995 for all prisoners in Scotland sentenced to 12 years and over. The Centre is located within the Shotts complex, but is a separately constituted prison. Prisoners spend the first six months of their sentence in the unit, before moving to the mainstream prison service.

Staffing consists of a part time Social Worker (17.5 Hours).

The cost of the Social Work service for 1997 / 98 will be £12,564.

- **Shotts Unit** - A unit with a capacity of 10, for long term prisoners who are unable to cope with mainstream prison life. The unit is located within the Shotts complex, but is a separately constituted prison.

3. SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

The various prisons differ markedly, in their characteristics, and in the style of social work provision made.

3.1 Longriggend Remand Unit

Longriggend houses some of the most vulnerable prisoners in Scotland, including many who have been sent to prison for the first time, and who are at high risk of suicide. As a remand unit, the turnover in the prison is high.

The focus of social work in Longriggend is on identification of risk, intervention to alleviate distress, and development of a close working relationship with the Prison Service. Under 16s are given high priority, with the aim of finding and offering to the courts alternative secure accommodation within child care establishments for the period of remand. Successful work in relation to those at risk demands efficient links with community based services, and close co-operative practice by all staff within the prison. The Social Work Unit also provides an addiction counselling service to prisoners.

The Governor at Longriggend recognises the skills of Social Work in relation to identification and intervention with vulnerable offenders, and the current limitations of the Prison Service. For 1997 / 98, the Social Work Department will continue to provide most services, but will be involved in joint working with Prison Service staff to develop their role further.

3.2 Shotts Prison

Shotts houses some of the most dangerous prisoners in the country. This includes approximately 50% of the sex offenders in Scotland who are sentenced to long term periods of imprisonment. The main areas of work in the prison relate to :

- the development and delivery of programmes designed to tackle offending behaviour.
- risk assessment of offenders who have committed offences against children, in preparation for communicating with Local Authorities regarding their return to the community.
- assisting the Prison Service and individual offenders in the management of drug use.

The balance of social work is split relatively evenly between direct service delivery and development of the role of prison officers. Many of the groups are managed jointly by Social Work and Prison Service staff. The Governor sees a gradual move over the next few years towards the aim of the Prison Service providing most services, with Social Work staff in the Prison having a role in relation to the process of offenders returning to the community, and as consultants to the Prison Service.

3.3 National Induction Centre

The Social Work Department has only been involved in the Centre since March 1996. The social work role is that envisaged in the longer term for all social work services in prisons - as a consultant to prison officers, only becoming directly involved with prisoners in the event of particular difficulty.

The work of the unit is still developing as it is a new venture for the Prison Service. Its aim is to help long term prisoners identify with sentence planning for themselves, and come to terms with the realities of spending a long period in prison. The focus for the social worker in the unit is to assist with the development of methods for assessment, counselling, and preparation for mainstream prison.

3.4 Shotts Unit

Until now, the unit has not had a discrete service. Any social work involvement has been as required, with most services being handled by the Prison Service. The Governor has recently indicated, however, a wish to involve social work staff more consistently. The arrangements for this are currently being negotiated.

4. CONCLUSION

The Committee is asked to note :

- ♦ The change in demands by the Scottish Prison Service for delivery of Social Work services.

and approve :

- ♦ The arrangements reached in each of the prisons for delivery of a Social Work service in 1997 / 98.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
December 16th 1996