

Country Report: Scotland

The information for this country report is largely gathered from sources published by the Scottish Executive Justice Department. These include prison inspections carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons, statistical bulletins and ministerial reports. The latest available information has been used wherever possible. Other important sources include the July 2006 Briefing paper of the Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice (SCCCJ), which is entitled 'Women in Prison in Scotland: An Unmet Commitment', and information provided by a variety of non-governmental organisations and interest groups.

1. Introduction

The prison population in Scotland has been growing steadily over recent years. In his latest annual report, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in Scotland highlighted the dangers posed by overcrowding in prisons, a serious problem that continues to threaten Scotland's justice system.¹ There are sixteen prisons and young offenders' institutes in Scotland.² The majority of these are for male adults while most female prisoners are held in one establishment, HMP Cornton Vale.³ Two other institutions cater for young, male offenders.

In 2005/06, the average daily population in Scottish prisons was 6,857, representing an increase of one per cent when compared with the corresponding figure for 2004/05 (6,779).⁴ This is the highest annual level ever recorded in Scotland.

The ten year period between 1996/97 and 2005/06 saw the average daily prison population rise by fourteen per cent.

In 2005/06, the average daily remand population was 1,242 (including 1,159 males and eighty-three females), representing an increase of two per cent when compared with the corresponding figure for 2004/05 (1,216). The number of young offenders held on remand increased by nine per cent from 260 in 2004/05 to 284 in 2005/06. Adult remand numbers remained largely unchanged, numbering 956 and 958 in the same two periods.⁵

Figure 1, below, shows an increase of twenty per cent in the adult sentenced prison population over the last ten years. The under twenty-one sentenced population can be seen to decrease by thirty per cent between 1996/97 and 2004/05, before increasing again in 2005/06. The remand population since 2002/03 has been noticeably higher than in the previous six years.⁶

¹ Scottish Executive, Publications, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in Scotland: Annual Report 2005 - 2006* [on-line], accessed 20 February 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/10/26121221/3>

² These are; Her Majesty's Prison (hereafter HMP) Aberdeen, HMP Barlinnie, HMP Castle Huntly, HMP Cornton Vale, HMP Dumfries, HMP Edinburgh, HMP Glenochil, HMP Greenock, HMP Inverness, HMP Kilmarnock, HMP Open Estate, HMP Perth, HMP Peterhead, HMP Shotts, Her Majesty's Young Offenders Institution (hereafter HM YOI) Cornton Vale and HM YOI Polmont.

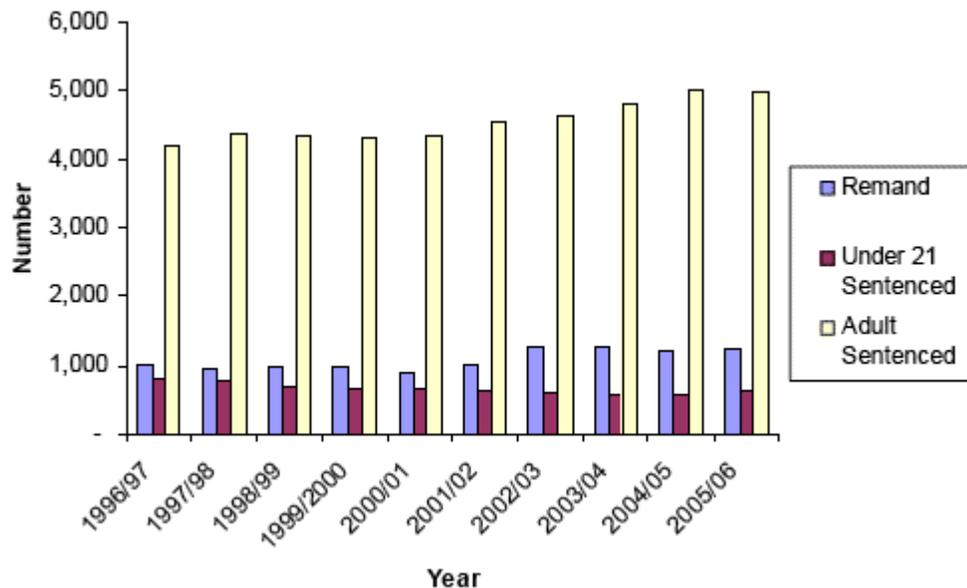
³ At the time of writing, all female prisoners in Scotland are held in HMP Cornton Vale.

⁴ Scotland Executive, Publications, *Prison Statistics 2005-06* [on-line], accessed 20 February 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/18103613/3>

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ibid.*

Figure 1: Average daily prison population, by category of prisoner⁷



2. Women prisoners in Scotland

The Scottish Executive has made clear its concern over the rising number of female prisoners. In December 2002, the Executive established 'The Ministerial Group on Women's Offending' in order to 'take forward and implement a package of measures designed to reduce significantly the numbers of women held in custody in Scotland.'⁸ This report was commissioned to build on a report made in 1998 by the Prisons and Social Work Inspectorates, *A Safer Way*, which concluded that 'the number of women offenders who are sent to prison could and should be reduced.'⁹ [*Emphasis in original*]

The Ministerial Group's report noted on the one hand, a policy commitment from Scottish Ministers to reduce the use of imprisonment, and on the other, that the number of female prisoners in Scotland continues to rise. Many of the women sent to prison posed 'very little risk to the communities in which they live'.¹⁰

Profile of Women Prisoners

In the period between 1996/97 and 2005/06, the female prison population increased by seventy-seven per cent while the male prison population grew by twelve per cent. In 1996/97,

⁷ *ibid.*, Chart 2.

⁸ Scottish Executive, *A Better Way - a report of the Ministerial Group on Women's Offending*, 2002, p. 2 [on-line], accessed 20 February 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158858/0043144.pdf>

⁹ Scottish Executive, Publications, *Women Offenders: A Safer Way - a Review of Community Disposals and the Use of Custody for Women Offenders in Scotland*, 1998, Ch. 6 [on-line], accessed 20 February 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/law/wosw-10.asp>

¹⁰ Scottish Executive, *A Better Way*, p. 3, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158858/0043144.pdf>

the average number of women in prison on a given day was 189, rising to 334 in 2005/06. Due to the nature of the sentences received by women, i.e. very often short (less than four years), the number of women who experienced prison in 2004/05 was 3126, compared with 2280 in 1996/97.¹¹

Prisons

The vast majority of women in prison in Scotland are held in one prison, Cornton Vale Prison for Women.¹² This prison is located in Stirling, in the centre of Scotland, and has 330 places. A small number of places are available for women in Aberdeen and Greenock.¹³ These are both male prisons which currently hold small numbers of women. The availability of these places enables those female prisoners to stay nearer their homes, although facilities in these prisons are inadequate in catering for them.

Scottish prisons are inspected in full by HM Inspectorate of Prisons every four years. In the years between inspections, a follow-up report is made to review progress in the areas highlighted by the latest full inspection. Examples of good practice, areas which need addressing and responses to previous reports are examined particularly thoroughly. The last full inspection of Cornton Vale Prison took place between 27 February and 3 March 2006.

The options for prisoner care, such as the 'Care Orderly Room',¹⁴ were highlighted as one example of good practice; an improvement in access to toilet facilities, where the introduction of CCTV has reduced prisoners' waiting times in the Younger and Skye House Blocks,¹⁵ was noted as an improvement following the 2005 follow-up report; however, the Inspectorate also noted that 'The visit room is no better than it was last year. And the condition of women coming in to the prison is at least as bad as before.'¹⁶

Crimes

In 2005/06, the most common offences for women in prison were related to drugs; their illegal possession, use and trafficking. Following this, the next most common offences were ones of serious assault.¹⁷

Women are more likely to be imprisoned for both drugs offences and dishonesty offences than men (twenty-eight per cent and twenty-seven per cent compared with fourteen per cent and fourteen per cent). Female prisoners are less likely to have committed violent offences than

¹¹ The Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice (SCCCJ), *Women in Prison in Scotland: An Unmet Commitment*. A Briefing Paper of the Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice, July 2006 [on-line], accessed 20 April 2007, available at <http://www.scccj.org.uk/SCCCJpublicationspage.htm>

¹² In August 2006, all women in prison in Scotland were being held in HMP Cornton Vale.

¹³ HMP Dumfries and HMP Inverness recently discontinued holding a small number of female inmates (in the last two years).

¹⁴ See Section 9, 'Security and punishment', p. 8.

¹⁵ Scottish Executive, Publications, *HM Inspectorate of Prisons: Full Inspection Report of HMP and YOI Cornton Vale*, August 2006, Chapter 2 [on-line], accessed 15 February 2007, available at <http://www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/18095811/3>

¹⁶ Scottish Executive, Publications, *HM Inspectorate of Prisons; Cornton Vale Inspection: 2-3 February, 2005* [on-line], accessed 15 February 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/05/09144207/42090#2> this view was reaffirmed in the Full Inspection Report, 2006.

¹⁷ Scotland Executive, *Prison Statistics 2005-06*, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/18103613/3>

men (thirty-one per cent compared with forty-one per cent for men),¹⁸ although there is concern that this proportion is increasing.

It is also noticeable that women are often imprisoned for failing to pay a fine. In 2004/05, 442 women were imprisoned for this reason, of which 331 were sent to prison for fourteen days or fewer and 230 owed less than 200 pounds sterling each in unpaid fines.¹⁹

3. Women on remand

The number of individuals being held on remand since 2002/03 has risen significantly when compared with the previous six years (see Figure 1 above). A high, and growing, number of women are remanded to prison before their cases come to trial. In 1996/97, the average daily population of women on remand was forty-six. This had grown to eighty-three by 2005/06.

Between 1996/97 and 2003/04, the total number of women remanded during the course of a year rose from 1009 to 1807, an increase of nearly eighty per cent.

4. Contact with the outside world

The conditions for visiting people in prison vary depending on whether that person is an untried prisoner awaiting trial or a convicted prisoner whose case has been decided. An untried prisoner is usually allowed one thirty minute visit each week day. A convicted prisoner will normally be allowed one thirty minute visit each week or a two-hour visit every twenty-eight days. Special arrangements can be made in the case of a prisoner being very ill or should a 'family crisis' ensue.

HMP Cornton Vale

HMP Cornton Vale (which houses almost all female prisoners in Scotland) has improved in some areas relating to prisoner contact, but others have not improved and continue to be a source of frustration for prisoners.²⁰

In his follow-up report in 2005, HM Chief Inspector was impressed by the newly opened family centre which had been in operation since late 2004.²¹ The St. Margaret Family Centre provides a place where children can play while visiting their mothers in prison and provides an improved atmosphere for family visits. There is a brightly decorated 'play area' as well as quiet rooms, some of which display the inmates' artwork.²² An arranged 'Partners Day' here provided an opportunity for prisoners and their families to meet with outside organisations which offer them support.²³ Ninety-seven prisoners attended the day.

Conditions for visits are still far from ideal, however. The follow-up report in 2005 noted that the waiting room for visitors is small, and is 'at best functional and struggles to meet current

¹⁸ SCCCJ, *Women in Prison in Scotland: An Unmet Commitment*, available at <http://www.scccj.org.uk/SCCCJpublicationspage.htm>

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Scottish Executive, *Cornton Vale Inspection: 2-3 February*, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/05/09144207/42090#2>

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Dr. A. Elliott, *Barclay Lecture*, 2nd November 2005, p. 3 [on-line], accessed 17 February 2007, available at <http://www.william-barclay.com/barclay-elliott.pdf>

²³ Including; 'Families Outside' and 'Hope'.

visitor needs.’²⁴ Furthermore, convicted prisoners still book visits themselves, a system which is inconsistent and one which many prisoners find dissatisfying.

HM Chief Inspector made clear that the facilities for visits in the prison were designed when the prison population was 100, rather than over 300 as is the case now. This will continue to be a major source of grievance for prisoners and staff alike until major changes are carried out.

5. Motherhood in prison

Most women in prison are mothers or primary carers.²⁵

Babies in prison

There is one mother and baby unit in HMP Cornton Vale, the only unit of its type in Scotland. Independent Living Units, which can house a mother and baby, do exist outside the prison. In May 2005, there were two mothers with a baby in HMP Cornton Vale; one mother was in the Mother and Baby Unit and the other in an Independent Living Unit. Work to comprehensively upgrade the Mother and Baby Unit has recently been completed which will improve the quality of life for those who live there. Plans are in place to have two members of staff, who are trained in childcare and child development, responsible for mothers and their babies who use these facilities.

6. Characteristics of women in prison

HM Chief Inspector commented on some characteristics of women in prison in Scotland. He observed that ‘Most women who come to prison are in a desperate state...Their life stories are consistently and overwhelmingly sad’.²⁶

The vast majority of women in HMP Cornton Vale have both mental health problems and at least one drug addiction. Eighty per cent of women in this prison have a history of mental illness, while over ninety per cent have an addiction to drugs. In one period of assessment, HM inspector notes, the figure for addiction was 100 per cent. As mentioned in his report, the statistics ‘make grim reading’.²⁷

In addition to these problems, seventy-five per cent of women have a history of abuse and very poor physical health.²⁸ The women in HMP Cornton Vale do not represent a cross-section of Scottish society; they are much damaged women, many of whom are not suited to prison and would benefit from other provisions.²⁹

²⁴ Scottish Executive, *Cornton Vale Inspection: 2-3 February*, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/05/09144207/42090#2>

²⁵ Approximately seventy per cent. See Scottish Executive, *A Better Way*, p.42, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158858/0043144.pdf>

²⁶ Scottish Executive Justice Department, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland: Report for 2003-04*, 2004, p. 16 [on-line], accessed 18 April 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/doc/1102/0004842.pdf>

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ SCCCJ, *Women in Prison in Scotland: An Unmet Commitment*, available at <http://www.scccj.org.uk/SCCCJpublicationspage.htm>

²⁹ Scottish Executive Justice Department, *Report for 2003-04*, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/doc/1102/0004842.pdf>

7. Education, work and training

Facilities for female prisoners' education, work and training are generally good in Scotland, both in HMP Cornton Vale, and in other prisons which hold women prisoners. In a thematic study conducted by the Scottish Office, the education facilities in HMP Cornton Vale were described as 'laudable',³⁰ while HM Chief Inspector of Prisons was highly positive with regard to conditions in the female unit of HMP Aberdeen in 2003.³¹

HMP Cornton Vale

Education and work facilities are good in HMP Cornton Vale, although there is room for improvement. A good relationship between staff and prisoners in education, work and training areas is reported³² and prisoners have some choice as to the courses of education and work they participate in. During their induction to prison practices, prisoners are informed of all classes on offer. The learning provider publicises courses with attractive posters, displayed in all of the accommodation blocks. A range of 'clear and well-presented'³³ leaflets also provide helpful information to prisoners on available learning opportunities. HM Chief Inspector reports that the range of courses offered in core skills does not meet the needs of all prisoners.³⁴

Education

The Education Unit in HMP Cornton Vale is formally linked to Clackmannan College, an educational institution in the region. At the time of the Scotland Office report in 1995/96, the unit was staffed by one full-time lecturer, who was head of the unit, and ten part-time lecturers, who teach prisoners in a variety of fields.³⁵

The Education Unit covers all sections of the prison, including young offenders, adult prisoners and prisoners on remand. Prisoners can receive tuition during the day for special needs, modern languages, basic literacy and numeracy. Recognised certification is offered to prisoners who participate in day classes in various fields. These include classes in art & crafts, communication, computer studies and cookery. An employment focus course is run quarterly for 'pre-release' prisoners, which contains advice on preparing a CV, interview & telephone techniques and how to start and keep a job. Evening classes are also held in computer studies, pottery, art & design and guitar playing at different times throughout the year.³⁶

³⁰ The Scottish Office, *Thematic Study: Custody and Training of Female Prisoners and Young Offenders in Scotland*, Conclusions, paragraph 8.2 [on-line], accessed 25 February 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents/fep8.htm>

³¹ Scottish Executive, Publications, *HM Inspectorate of Prisons; Aberdeen Inspection: 19-20 June, 2003* [on-line], accessed 20 April 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/09/18238/26844>

³² Scottish Executive, *Full Inspection Report of HMP and YOI Cornton Vale*, Chapter 7, available at <http://www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/18095811/8>

³³ *ibid.*, paragraph 7.9.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ The Scottish Office, *Thematic Study*, paragraph 3.7, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents/fep8.htm> The number of staff in the unit may have changed since this date.

³⁶ See *ibid.*, paragraph 3.8.

Work

The employment structure at HMP Cornton Vale means young offenders and convicted prisoners share the same area for work purposes. The nature of the work undertaken by the prisoners is largely focussed upon what might be described as a stereotypical female model, often involving duties of a domestic nature such as textile operations, food preparation and cooking (amongst others). There are limited places for prisoners who want to do other work, including hairdressing and gardening, although the availability depends on the season and other variable factors.

In his 2004 inspection, HM Chief Inspector reported that 'employment in Cornton Vale is in transition'.³⁷ Management at the prison has made plans to introduce new opportunities for prisoners to receive more certificated work opportunities, including BICS certification in Industrial Cleaning and SVQs in Housekeeping and Food Preparation. In general, these plans are being followed. Other courses, such as training in first aid and in health & safety, are already incorporated within the prisoners' induction programmes and are certificated.³⁸ The work strategy of HMP Cornton Vale seems to be one focussed upon the development of prisoners' life skills.

Prisoners in the Independent Living Units, which cater for prisoners towards the end of their sentences, mothers with babies and some other cases,³⁹ have a range of opportunities to find employment in external organisations. Many employers are very willing to participate in arrangements with the prison and cases where prisoners, upon release, continue their employment with these organisations, are not uncommon.⁴⁰

Other

Women held in other prisons, all of which are predominantly for male prisoners, are well catered for in terms of work, education and training facilities. In the report on HMP Greenock in 2004, HM Inspectorate considered the education and work opportunities to be very positive having overviewed the transfer of women prisoners from HMP Cornton Vale with some concern. Women prisoners are reported to have spoken 'very positively'⁴¹ about their experience of HMP Greenock, and all participated in 'a full programme of work and activities'.⁴²

There were ten women housed in HMP Aberdeen when the HM Inspectorate conducted its report in 2003. The report was entirely positive of the conditions for the women, who were reported as being 'happy with conditions in the unit [in general]'.⁴³ Of the ten women in the unit, four were attending education classes, five were working in the unit and one was

³⁷ Scottish Executive, Publications, *HM Inspectorate of Prisons; HMP and YOI Cornton Vale Inspection; 4-6 February, 2004*, paragraph 13.14 [on-line], accessed 20 February 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/05/19329/36710>

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ Prisoners needing low levels of supervision may be considered; for example, those with a strong record of 'good behaviour'.

⁴⁰ Scottish Executive, *Full Inspection Report of HMP and YOI Cornton Vale*, paragraph 7.8, available at <http://www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/18095811/8>

⁴¹ Scottish Executive, Publications, *HM Inspectorate of Prisons: HMP Greenock Inspection: 10-11 March, 2004*, paragraph 2.3 [on-line], accessed 25 February 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/07/19524/39219#1>

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ Scottish Executive, Publications, *HM Inspectorate of Prisons: HMP Aberdeen Inspection: 19-20 June, 2003*, paragraph 3.27 [on-line], accessed 25 February 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/09/18238/26844>

attending a visit. Of those working, some were cleaning; some attending to laundry and one was filling breakfast bags.⁴⁴

8. Minority groups

There are two institutes for young offenders in Scotland, HM YOI Polmont and HM YOI Cornton Vale.

Young Adults

All female prisoners under the age of twenty-one were held in HMP Cornton Vale when the last inspection took place.⁴⁵ All convicted women under the age of twenty-one were housed in the same block, Skye House, which also holds the majority of non-convicted young women. Prisoners in Skye can play bingo and watch DVDs and television during recreation time. There is opportunity for the prisoners to make telephone calls with a degree of privacy, and HM Inspectorate's latest report described the rooms in the house block as 'clean, tidy and well appointed'.⁴⁶ Young women, as appears the case with the vast majority of women in prison in HMP Cornton Vale, do complain of boredom in the evenings. These women in particular are often inexperienced in managing their own time and unable to entertain themselves.

Juveniles

In 2005/06, no girl (under sixteen years old) had been detained, although eighteen boys in the same age group had been held in YOI Polmont. Juveniles are treated differently to adult prisoners, members of staff wear polo shirts instead of uniforms in YOI Polmont,⁴⁷ for example, but prison is not a suitable place for children, whether or not it is used as a last resort.

9. Security and punishment

Security in HMP Cornton Vale is the responsibility of the Custody and Order Manager. He is responsible for the prison gate, visiting security, escorting arrangements, physical security and operational and readiness management. No female prisoners have escaped in recent years.

In 2005/06, as in 2004/05, there were two incidents of serious assaults. Both assaults in 2005/06 were prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, whereas one serious assault in 2004/05 was prisoner-on staff. HM Inspectorate reported an increase in the number of minor prisoner-on-prisoner assaults over the same period. The management of the prison was alerted to this and encouraged to examine the reasons behind this increase.⁴⁸

The conditions under which prisoners are escorted between prison and other institutions, such as a hospital or a court, have been heavily criticised. It is common practice for all prisoners to be 'double-cuffed', where hands are cuffed together as well as a second pair of cuffs attaching the prisoner to the escorting officer. Pregnant women are handcuffed to a custody officer

⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, paragraphs 3.26, 3.27 and 3.28.

⁴⁵ Scottish Executive, *Full Inspection Report of HMP and YOI Cornton Vale*, paragraph 1.1, available at <http://www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/18095811/2>

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, paragraph 2.23.

⁴⁷ Scottish Executive, Publications, *HM Inspectorate of Prisons: Report on HM Young Offenders Institute Polmont*, August, 2004, paragraph 2.19 [on-line], accessed 25 February 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/08/19688/40570>

⁴⁸ Scottish Executive, *Full Inspection Report of HMP and YOI Cornton Vale*, paragraph 3.2, available at <http://www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/18095811/4>

throughout labour, almost to the point of childbirth, and are usually re-cuffed within an hour of the birth. This is a humiliating experience for the women. HM Inspectorate reports that male officers are sometimes present throughout this process, as they have been when prisoners have attended 'an intimate gynaecological examination'.⁴⁹ These practices do not treat prisoners with an acceptable standard of decency or dignity.

Prisoners are punished for disobeying the prison rules. Assaulting other prisoners, insulting staff and drug offences can all lead to a prisoner being placed on report for a disciplinary offence, for example. When reported, the normal cause of action is to refer the offence to the 'Orderly Room'. The charge will then be dealt with and any disciplinary action taken. If a prisoner is reported for a drug offence, the case may be referred to the 'Care Orderly Room'. Here the incident is discussed and the outcome will usually be an action plan for the prisoner. If this plan is followed, the charge will be dealt with more leniently than otherwise.⁵⁰

Other restorative measures are practised by the prison when other offences have been committed.⁵¹ Trained facilitators look at an issue with the prisoner concerned, for example, in an attempt to agree on an outcome that must be adhered to. HM Inspectorate was highly satisfied with disciplinary measures currently in place in HMP Cornton Vale, stating in their report that the options given to prisoners 'try as far as possible to remove the individual from formal disciplinary sanctions, concentrating on reaching workable solutions or outcomes. This is an area of innovation and good practice.'⁵²

10. Staff and management

Reports of staff-prisoner relationships in HMP Cornton Vale are positive. Members of staff are qualified and often very experienced in their roles throughout the prison. The Governor of the prison, Ian Gunn, has spent fourteen years working in the prison service,⁵³ although he has been in his current role for less than a year.

The structure of the senior management team is displayed below in Figure 2.

Despite some very positive reports of relationships between prisoners and staff, some concerns have been raised regarding the relationship between members of staff. These relationships have been held back as certain staff groups feel others do not understand or appreciate the work undertaken by their particular group. This has caused some distress and feelings of resentment among some staff members. These problems are familiar to many prisons, and other organisations, and should be addressed in order to focus attention on their working towards a common goal.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, paragraph 3.4.

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, paragraph 3.13.

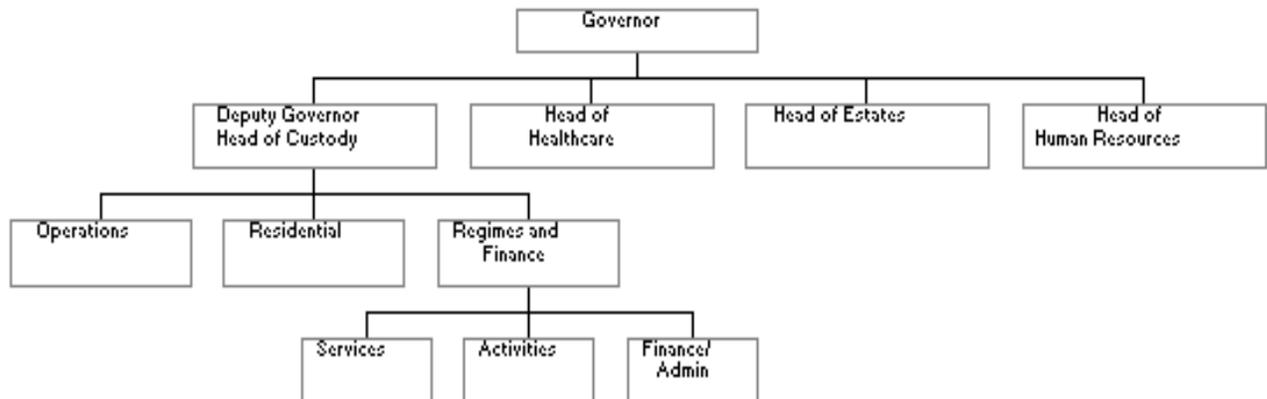
⁵¹ When there has been conflict, for example.

⁵² Scottish Executive, *Full Inspection Report of HMP and YOI Cornton Vale*, paragraph 3.15, available at <http://www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/18095811/4>

⁵³ Including six years spent as Governor of HMP Peterhead.

⁵⁴ See *ibid.*, paragraph 10.31.

Figure 2: Organisation of Senior Management Team at HMP Cornton Vale⁵⁵



11. Additional information

The 218 Centre in Glasgow

Following recommendations made by an Inter-Agency Forum, a forum established with the aim of creating services for women in the criminal justice system, a 'Time Out' Centre was created in Glasgow. This Centre was designed to address the needs of female offenders in Glasgow in order to reduce re-offending and, as a consequence, reduce the number of women who end up in custody.⁵⁶ The Centre provides both residential and non-residential support for female offenders, offering them time away from their normal lives without spending time in prison. This Centre is called '218' and opened for women in December, 2003.⁵⁷

Between April 2004 and March 2005, 143 women engaged with the 218 project. The women who took part in the project, over this time period, had a variety of past offences which included: Shoplifting and theft (seventy per cent of the women); violence (forty-eight per cent); and drug offences (thirty-six per cent).⁵⁸

The profile of the women who have engaged with the services at 218, including their lifestyles, characteristics and criminal records, is the same as those imprisoned in HMP Cornton Vale. It can be seen as likely, therefore, that the women in the Centre could have been incarcerated had 218 Centre not been in operation.⁵⁹ In the report made by Louks *et al.*, a highly positive appraisal of the Centre was given:

⁵⁵ HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland, *Report on HMP and YOI: Cornton Vale 2001*, paragraph 10.2 [on-line], accessed 6 March 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/hmip/docs/corntonvale-12.asp> Elements of the management structure may have changed since this publication.

⁵⁶ Nancy Louks, Margaret Malloch, Gill McIvor and Loraine Gelsthorpe, *Evaluation of the 218 Centre*, Scottish Executive Justice Department, 2006 [on-line], accessed 7 March 2007, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/04/24161157/0>

⁵⁷ For information on the 128 Centre, see *218 the alternative* [on-line], available at <http://www.218.org.uk/index.htm>

⁵⁸ SCCCJ, *Women in Prison in Scotland: An Unmet Commitment*, available at <http://www.scccj.org.uk/SCCCJpublicationspage.htm>

⁵⁹ Although, of course, we cannot say for sure if these women would have ended up in prison.

'All respondents viewed 218 as being exceptionally good at engaging with women, and workers (within 218 and external service providers) gave anecdotal evidence of women they had encountered in other community settings who continually failed to engage with services, but who had come to 218, appeared to be making good progress, and who were attending regularly.'⁶⁰

The successes of the 218 Centre in Glasgow should be built upon as the Scottish Executive seeks to find ways of reducing the number of inappropriately incarcerated women.

⁶⁰ Louks *et al.*, Evaluation of the 218 Centre, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/04/24161157/0>