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West Lothian Council

PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SAFETY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THEMATIC REVIEW OF PRISON BASED SOCIAL WORK

REPORT BY HEAD OF SOCIAL POLICY

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Panel with update information following conclusion of the Care Inspectorate led thematic of prison based social work (PBSW) in Scotland.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the contents of the report
2. Notes the key findings within the report and the expected impacts within West Lothian

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	**Council Values**	Caring and Compassionate Open, Honest and Accountable Collaborate, Inclusive and Adaptive
II	**Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)**	Public Service Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 National Strategy for Community Justice June 2022 Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019
III	**Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers**	No implications.
IV	**Impact on performance and performance Indicators**	None
V	**Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement**	People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances.
VI	**Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)**	None

VII	**Consideration at PDSP**	A report was presented to the PCS PDSP on 12 December 2023 to update on the commencement of the thematic review

D TERMS OF REPORT

1 Background

1.1 A thematic review of prison-based social work under sections 53 and 115 of the Public Service Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 commenced in July 2023 and was reported to the Public Community Safety PDSP in December 2023. The final report for this review was published in April 2024.

1.2 This review was carried out by the Care Inspectorate in partnership with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS), who are responsible for the inspection and monitoring of Scotland's 15 prisons and 2 custody centers including HMP Addiewell, West Lothian. This was the first review of prison based social work since 2010.

1.3 This process was not an inspection of prison based social work practice and therefore evaluating the quality of prison-based social work practice was out with the review scope. The thematic review findings will provide a basis for the Care Inspectorate's future activity in this regard.

2 National Context

2.1 For context, Scotland's prison population remains amongst the highest in Western Europe with approximately 8,000 people in custody in any one day. People entering custody are disproportionately from deprived areas and the proportion of the prison population over the age of 50 is rapidly growing. Fewer people receive prison sentences but the sentences are longer with those people in prison for sexual offences doubling over the last decade (contributed to by the conviction of those with historical sexual offences). The complexity of the work has therefore changed significantly for the work force.

2.2 This thematic review focused on the governance, leadership, and accountability of prison-based social work in Scotland. The approach was informed by the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) model. Consideration was given to the strategic direction of prison based social work, the national picture in terms of the strengths and challenges of current arrangements and areas for improvement were highlighted.

2.3 Scottish Government ministers provide funding to the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) which enables them to pay local authorities for the provision of prison-based social work services. Each prison has a dedicated social work service provided by the relevant local authority. All but one, are publicly managed by SPS. HMP Addiewell is privately managed by Sodexo. These local arrangements are incorporated within a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the (SPS) and every local authority with a prison in their area and in the case of Addiewell between Sodexo and the West Lothian Justice Services.

2.4 The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 states that all local authorities in Scotland have a legal duty to provide "advice, guidance and assistance" for people in prison or subject to any form of detention. The social work service provided by a local authority is therefore integral to the legal, efficient, and effective operation of any prison or custody unit. In this context, the range of statutory social work services provided to people in prison and their families is termed 'throughcare'. This is from the point of being sentenced to custody, during the period of imprisonment, and following return to the community. Prison-based

social workers hold important responsibilities for the assessment and communication of risk and need within prisons, and preparing people to return to the community.

2.5 The core responsibilities and tasks of prison-based social workers include:

- providing risk assessments and case and risk management plans
- preparing reports for the Parole Board for Scotland to inform sentence and release planning
- contributing to release planning meetings such as integrated case management, case conferences, and risk management team meetings
- working with prisoners, their families, SPS, other agencies, and community based justice social work services to reduce the risk of reoffending and harm on release and to assist reintegration within the community

3 West Lothian Engagement with the thematic review

3.1 The prison based social work team located in Addiewell HMP are managed by West Lothian Council's justice services. The social workers, team manager, group manager and senior manager with responsibility for this area were all included in this review through the completion of a staff survey and engagement in focus groups which were held in October and November 2023. There was a high response rate, with survey responses remaining strictly confidential.

4 Key Findings

4.1 Governance

The review identified challenges in respect of funding and commissioning arrangements with the SPS noting difficulty with the ability to work collaboratively and consistently with all of the different local authorities. Publicly managed local arrangements as detailed within a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) were found to lack clarity, impacting on oversight. A lack of up to date national guidance was noted as compounding the issue. The increase in demand on PBSW based on the changing demographics and increased complexity and risk levels was not felt to be recognized within the existing MoU's. Privately managed arrangements which refers to those in Addiewell were viewed as more effective with clearer performance reporting noted. It was also highlighted that PBSW teams did have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

4.2 Leadership

The review identified a lack of national vision, consensus and leadership with little strategic direction provided nationally to PBSW. The role of PBSW was found to be lacking in visibility and to be poorly understood. The review identified a need nationally for more direct leadership to oversee improvement and change. Local leadership and oversight were noted as operating effectively with good engagement between key partners driving improvement.

4.3 Accountability

The review identified that overall PBSW teams were skilled and experienced with a clear commitment to public protection. Supportive direct line management was identified as well as strong connections to wider justice and community based services. A lack of meaningful and robust performance management was noted nationally to drive improvement along with a lack of understanding of the impact of increased resource demand on the capacity to deliver services effectively and timeously. The lack of a clear national training plan and workforce planning to address the changing prison population, holistic needs and

subsequent workload pressures was highlighted.

4.4 Lived Experience Engagement

32 people contributed to the review and contact levels with PBSW services was largely felt to be insufficient. Workers were noted to be caring and supportive but more contact out with critical dates of sentencing was felt to be required.

5 Recommendations

5.1 There were no specific recommendations for West Lothian Justice services as this was a thematic review and not an inspection process. Conclusions did note the need for fundamental reform to strengthen and improve governance, leadership and accountability arrangements at a national level, with the need for better direction and coordination. National strategic workforce planning and joint training along with better commissioning arrangements was highlighted as necessary. West Lothian Justice service will take note of all findings including the voices of those with lived experience in delivering their service.

E. CONCLUSION

West Lothian have in place an effective Memorandum of Understanding in relation to delivery of prison based social work services in HMP Addiewell. There is a recognition of the changes in the prison population and there are effective performance management systems in place. The use of technology is being strengthened and increasing opportunities for those with lived experience to share their views is a priority. Involvement in this thematic review highlighted the good partnership working which is in place locally. There is a strong connection between the PBSW team and the community based justice services and partners and a good understanding of the whole journey. All parts of justice are managed under one group manager and one senior manager who are focused on the development and ongoing improvement for justice services as a whole.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices: Prison-based social work thematic review.pdf (careinspectorate.com)

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Date of meeting: 22 October 2024

APPENDIX 1

Item No. 7

care inspectorate

HMIPS
HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS FOR SCOTLAND

Prison-based social work:
thematic review

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1. Introduction

The Care Inspectorate is the independent scrutiny, assurance and improvement support body for social care and social work in Scotland. The powers and duties of the Care Inspectorate are set out in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Government tasked the Care Inspectorate to lead on scrutiny and assurance of justice social work and support the implementation of the community justice model.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS) is responsible for the inspection and monitoring of Scotland's 17 prisons and custody centres. HMIPS report publicly on its findings. Inspection and monitoring activity focuses on establishing the treatment of and the conditions for prisoners. It also focuses on the conditions in which prisoners are transported or held in pursuance of prisoner escort arrangements.

The justice inspectorates in Scotland are committed to working in partnership on shared areas of interest and responsibility. The Care Inspectorate routinely contributes to HMIPS' annual inspection programme. However, this is the first time we have undertaken a joint focus on prison-based social work services.

The Care Inspectorate's Community Justice Social Work: Throughcare Review was published in 2021. It focused on community justice social work practice, specifically breach and recall of people released from custody. The scope of this work did not include prison-based social work services. There has been no specific scrutiny of social work services in Scotland's prisons since the former Social Work Inspection Agency's 2011 national inspection programme.

As a first step, this thematic review focused on the governance, leadership, and accountability of prison-based social work in Scotland. Our approach was informed by the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) model. We looked at the strategic direction of prison-based social work services. We considered the national picture in terms of the strengths and challenges of current arrangements and highlight areas for improvement. It is important to emphasise that evaluating the quality of prison-based social work practice was outwith the scope of this phase of the review. However, our findings provide a basis for the Care Inspectorate's future activity in this regard.

It must be noted that prison-based social work operates in the secondary setting of a prison within a complex system. Therefore, many of the issues identified in this review are beyond their direct control. Further, prison-based social work cannot be divorced from wider justice social work services. Some of the strengths and areas for improvement identified in this review are echoed or amplified in the sector as a whole. This was highlighted in a recent research report about justice social work services commissioned by the Scottish Government. The cross-cutting areas for improvement will therefore require a multi-partner response at national and local leadership levels.

The 2011 SWIA review of social work services in prison identified a need to strengthen leadership and strategic planning. This remains an important area of improvement. This review highlighted a strong consensus from all partners that

significant change was required. This was with a view to achieving robust and consistent leadership, governance, and accountability of prison-based social work services at a local and national level.

For the purposes of this report, the term ‘partners’ refers to the people and organisations we engaged with as part of the thematic review (please see Appendix 1).

We are very grateful to everyone who gave so willingly of their time by responding to our survey, sharing their views within meetings and focus groups, and reflecting on what needs to improve. Particular thanks go to the people who use prison-based social work services for sharing their views and experiences.

2. Key messages

Governance

- Governance arrangements for prison-based social work services lack clarity. There is a strong consensus that fundamental reform of the current arrangements is required.
- The current funding and commissioning arrangements for prison-based social work services are no longer fit for purpose. This requires revision as a priority.
- Governance arrangements across the women's estate are characterised by stronger collaborative working between the Scottish Prison Service and prison-based social work services.
- Despite out-of-date guidance and insufficient governance arrangements, prison-based social work staff generally have a consistent understanding of their day-to-day roles and responsibilities and are committed to delivering effective services.
- Scottish Prison Service leaders experience challenges in their attempts to work collaboratively and consistently across local authorities and establishments.

Leadership

- There is no clear national vision nor a consensus on the aims of prison-based social work, linked to a lack of clear national governance and leadership.
- There is a significant gap in leadership of strategy and direction for prison-based social work at a national level. This contributes to inconsistencies in prison-based social work practice across establishments.
- The commitment of Social Work Scotland in engaging with key partners to drive improvement for prison-based social work is a strength. However, as a non-statutory body there are limitations to this role in terms of reaching consensus and influencing change.
- The role of prison-based social work is not as visible or as well-understood as it could be across Scottish Prison Service establishments, among national and local partners, and by people in custody. The challenges of operating in a secondary setting compound this.
- Where collaborative leadership and planning, characterised by mutually respectful relationships, is taking place between the Scottish Prison Service and social work at an establishment level, there is a clearer shared vision.
- Justice social work service managers clearly retain leadership for their prison-based social work teams. However, there was a desire for prison-based social work services to have greater priority within local strategic planning.

- The Scottish Government should take a more direct leadership role in the co-ordination and oversight of improvement and change.

Accountability

- Overall, prison-based social work teams are comprised of skilled and experienced staff. They are characterised by a strong value base, a clear commitment to public protection and to supporting desistance from offending, and supportive line management.

- Pressurised resources for prison-based social work impacts on the capacity to deliver services effectively and timeously. This also affects capacity to build relationships, engage in offence-focused work, or develop services.

- The role of prison-based social work services could be enhanced to address holistic needs. However, this would require a fundamental service redesign and increase in resources.

- There are no consistent, meaningful, or suitably robust performance management or quality assurance measures nationally. Without these, there is limited evidence to drive improvement.

- There is no clear national multi-partner training strategy nor strategic workforce planning for prison-based social work, despite the changing prison population and subsequent workload pressures.

Key messages from people with living experience of prison-based social work services

- Some people find their prison-based social worker very accessible, characterised by frequent contact and open, supportive, and caring relationships. People value contact being made outwith critical dates in their sentence.
- However, the majority of people view contact levels with prison-based social workers as insufficient. They feel they have limited time to build relationships, which fosters a perception of workers being 'task-oriented'.
- When prison-based social workers are able to develop meaningful and constructive relationships, using their broad range of skills, this has a positive impact on people in custody's welfare and involvement in key processes.
- Prison-based social work services are often viewed as not sufficiently visible, understood, or accessible to people. There can be a conflation of the prison-based and community-based social work role. There is sometimes a perception of imbalanced power differences between people in custody and social work.
- The impact of these challenges contributes to increased stress and decreased motivation for some people in custody.

3. Background and context

Scotland's prison population remains among the highest in western Europe. On any one day, the Scottish Prison Service (referred to throughout this report as the acronym SPS) is responsible for the security and welfare of approximately 8,000 people in 17 establishments across Scotland.

The Vision for Justice in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2022) acknowledges the negative impact of short-term custodial sentences on people's life chances. A key aim is that people should only be held in custody where they present a risk of serious harm. The vision includes a commitment to transformational change by shifting the balance between the use of custody and community justice. It outlines the complex needs and challenges that people in contact with the criminal justice system experience, such as trauma, mental and physical health difficulties, and substance use. People entering custody are disproportionately from the most deprived areas of Scotland. Further, the proportion of people in prison over the age of 50 is rapidly growing. This reflects the complexity of some of the people who receive a prison-based social work service.

Although fewer people are receiving a custodial sentence each year, those who are sent to prison tend to receive longer sentences. The number of people in prison for sexual offences had more than doubled over the last decade. This means an increase in people requiring a prison-based social work service during their sentence. This might involve people with complex needs and/or serious and organised offending behaviour. Nonetheless, the national vision for justice makes no explicit reference to prison-based social work services.

The SPS, through Scottish Government ministers, is one of the eight statutory partners within local community justice governance arrangements. The service is expected to work with local justice partners to deliver the aims and priorities outlined by the Scottish Government in the National Strategy for Community Justice (2022).

One of the four national aims for community justice partners is to:

"…Strengthen the leadership, engagement, and partnership working of local and national community justice partners", with a priority action to: "Deliver improved community justice outcomes by ensuring that effective leadership and governance arrangements are in place and working well, collaborating with partners and planning strategically".

This review considered arrangements for prison-based social work in this context.

Public protection remains the first priority within the national strategy. Protecting the public cannot be achieved by any one agency. As such, community justice partners are expected to form strong partnerships at each point of the justice system. The SPS therefore works in partnership with national and local agencies to fulfil its core responsibilities.

The Scottish Prison Service Corporate Plan 2023 – 2028 intends to ensure that:

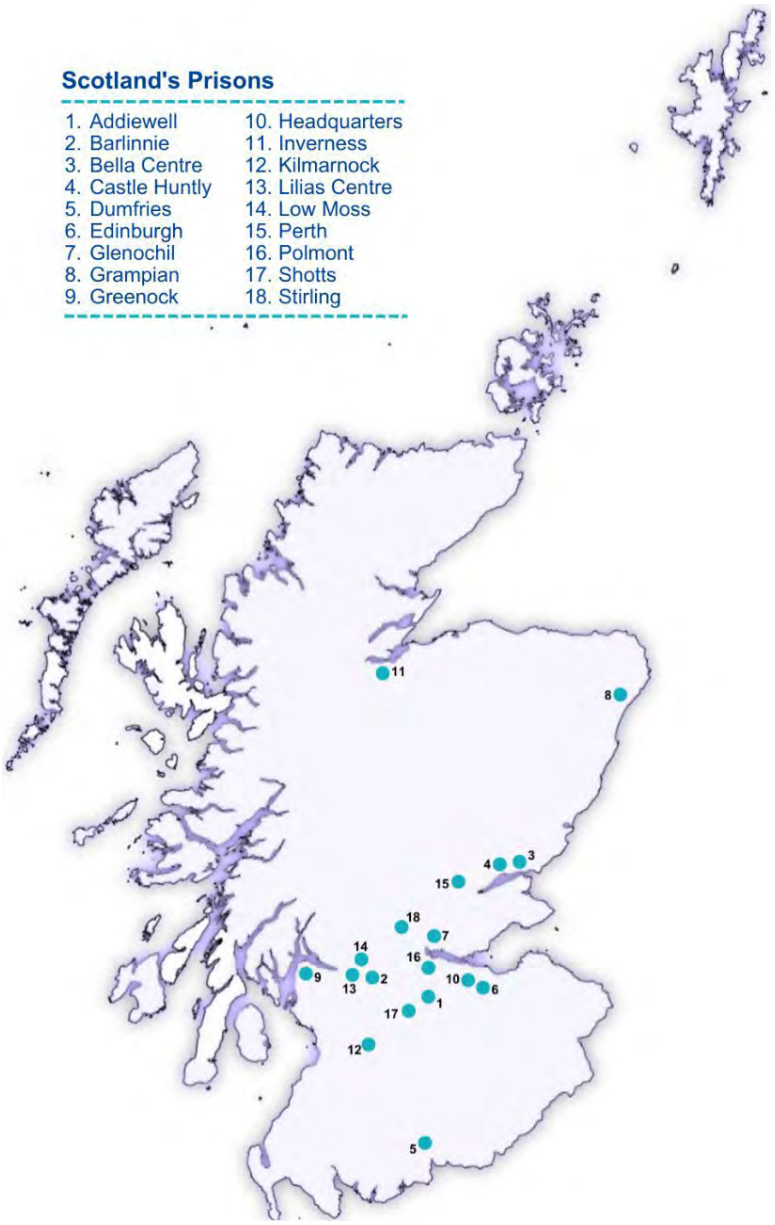
- people in Scotland's prisons live in establishments that are safe, secure and suitable
- the health, wellbeing and care of people who live in Scotland's prisons are better promoted, managed and tailored to individual needs
- people in Scotland's prisons are better supported to follow an individualised pathway towards release, in ways that prioritise public protection.

Scottish Government ministers provide funding to the SPS that enables them to pay local authorities for the provision of prison-based social work services. Each of the 17 custodial establishments has a dedicated social work service provided by the relevant local authority. These local arrangements are incorporated within a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the SPS and every local authority with a prison in their area.

Figure 1: Local authorities providing social work services in prisons

Aberdeenshire council	HMP Grampian
City of Edinburgh council	HMP Edinburgh
Clackmannanshire council	HMP Glenochil
Dundee City council	Bella Centre (community custody unit)
Dumfries and Galloway council	HMP Dumfries
East Ayrshire council	HMP Kilmarnock
East Dunbartonshire	HMP Low Moss
Falkirk council	HMPYOI Polmont
Glasgow City council	HMP Barlinnie Lilias Centre (community custody unit)
Highland council	HMP Inverness
Inverclyde council	HMP Greenock
North Lanarkshire council	HMP Shotts
Perth and Kinross council	HMP Castle Huntly HMP Perth
Stirling council	HMPYOI Stirling
West Lothian council	HMP Addiewell

Figure 2: Map of Scotland's prisons (reproduced from the SPS website)



Prison-based social work responsibilities

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968[1] states that all local authorities in Scotland have a legal duty to provide "advice, guidance and assistance" for people in prison or subject to any form of detention. The social work service provided by a local authority is therefore integral to the legal, efficient, and effective operation of any prison or custody unit. In this context, the range of statutory social work services provided to people in prison and their families is termed 'throughcare'. This is from the point of being sentenced to custody, during the period of imprisonment, and following return to the community. Prison-based social workers hold important responsibilities for the assessment and communication of risk and need within prisons, and preparing people to return to the community.

In general, prison-based social work services prioritise work with people who will be subject to statutory supervision following their release. People in custody serving the following types of statutory sentences (each of which has its own legislative basis) require a prison-based social work service.

- Supervised release order
- Long-term sentence (four or more years)
- Extended sentence
- Life sentence
- Order for lifelong restriction
- People subject to a short-term sex offender licence
- Recalled prisoners

The Scottish Government's annual Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland publication 2022-23 noted that, as at 31 March 2023, the statutory custody-based and community-based throughcare caseload totalled 5,400 people. Two-thirds of the caseload was custody-based, compared to one-third that was community-based. As such, there were 3,572 people in custody requiring a prison-based social work service at that time.

The core responsibilities and tasks of prison-based social workers include:

- providing risk assessments and case and risk management plans
- preparing reports for the Parole Board for Scotland to inform sentence and release planning
- contributing to release planning meetings such as integrated case management, case conferences, and risk management team meetings

[1] Section 27(1)(ac).

- working with prisoners, their families, SPS, other agencies, and community-based justice social work services to reduce the risk of reoffending and harm on release and to assist reintegration within the community.

Over the past 12 years, prison-based social workers have been required to undertake an increasingly important role in the provision of structured risk assessments. This involves specialist training in the use of appropriate tools to inform professional decision-making.

4. Governance

The Scottish Government, on behalf of its ministers, sets the legislation and vision for the justice system. It also holds responsibility for directing policy and providing a range of guidance to support delivery of priorities and intended outcomes. Within the Scottish Government, the chief social work adviser advises ministers and policy teams on all aspects of social work.

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on statutory partners, which includes the local authority and SPS, to work together to deliver the national aims and priorities. Community Justice Scotland is the national leadership body for community justice. It has a statutory duty to monitor local community justice performance and promote the National Strategy for Community Justice. It also promotes good practice and provides support to community justice partners.

Social Work Scotland has an important leadership role in representing the voice of justice social work services. This is due to the absence of a dedicated statutory governance function for justice social work services at a national level. As a professional leadership body for social work, members work closely with justice partners to influence policy and practice and shape legislation. This is with the aim of improving the experience of social work services and the people they work with.

Depending on local governance arrangements, responsibility for the oversight of social work services sits with either the local authority or health and social care partnerships. While reporting and management structures are determined locally, in legislation, the chief social work officer (CSWO) holds responsibility for providing professional leadership and governance for all social work functions. This includes prison-based social work services.

Commissioning arrangements

The memorandum of understanding

The Scottish Government allocates funds to the SPS to enable it to pay for the statutory prison-based social work services provided by the relevant local authority. These arrangements are then detailed within a memorandum of understanding (MoU). The common purpose between SPS and local authorities denoted in the MoU is to:

> "reduce reoffending by ensuring that persons in custody have access to an appropriate range and quality of prison-based social work services according to their risks, needs and responsivity to support delivery of national strategy".

This purpose reflects the previous national vision for justice, rather than the current vision.

The MoU is not viewed as a commissioning document and is instead presented as a governance framework. We found that it does not assist in providing clear governance arrangements. The section on scope of service provides a list of prison-based social work responsibilities, SPS responsibilities and any that are shared. The MoU is confirmation that the SPS and the local authority agree the annual resource

and funding requirements for provision of prison-based social work services.

Social work and SPS strategic leaders noted a significant increase in pressure on prison-based social work services. This was attributed to various factors such as increasing responsibilities in relation to assessing risk of serious harm and multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA). The changing prison population, including people with increasingly complex needs, as well as an increase in oral hearings were also contributing to pressures. The MoU allows for variations to the designated tasks to be requested, due to the changing demographics in custody, or plans to improve service efficiency. While this had occurred in some establishments, requesting further resources was often experienced as difficult and contentious for local authorities. This contributed to tensions with the SPS. This was compounded by arrangements lacking neither a clear funding formula nor consistent performance monitoring and reporting to usefully inform a business case. This was contrasted with the previous service-level agreement process, which some partners believed to have been clearer.

The standard MoU requires parties to acknowledge that allocated funding would not be revisited until any new service design is agreed nationally. It emphasises that the availability of funding remains a matter for Scottish Government ministers. However, there were no current plans to redesign services nor revisit the MoU nationally. This was despite all partners agreeing that it should be revisited due to the increased pressure on services.

According to the MoU, both the SPS and the local authority are expected to jointly and regularly consider matters of accountability and best value. That said, there was a considerable lack of clarity among partners on what constituted best value. There was also uncertainty on the course of action taken should prison-based social work services not be delivered in accordance with the agreed MoU. The MoU states that the SPS' director of strategy and innovation (or a representative) is responsible for providing corporate oversight of all social work MoU arrangements in prisons. This would seem to be a key national governance and accountability role. However, the MoU also expects matters to be kept to "as local a level as possible". This tension in governance contributed to difficulties in achieving consistency of practice in prison-based social work services across the estate. It also made it difficult to aggregate themes at a national level, and to escalate issues at an establishment level up to strategic leaders for resolution.

Furthermore, social work leaders viewed the MoU arrangements as contributing to an inherent power imbalance between prison-based social work services, the SPS and other agencies. This was characterised by what was viewed as a 'bean counting' culture and a 'wish list' of what prison-based social work should be doing. There was far less emphasis on the quality of the work undertaken. This contributed to a perception that as a profession, prison based social work was less valued within establishments. SPS leaders recognised a need for greater clarity on what prison-based social work distinctly offers and how this aligned with the corporate direction of the organisation.

In general, partners were frustrated by the governance and funding arrangements for prison-based social work services. The MoU was not delivering the desired results. There was therefore a strong consensus across all partners that the funding

and commissioning arrangements for prison-based social work required review. Indeed, as part of the criminal justice sector Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2024-25 responses to the Scottish Government, a joint submission by Social Work Scotland and COSLA suggested that:

"…Consideration should be given to including prison-based social work services within the Section 27[2] financial allocation...rather than a service commissioned by SPS…while taking account of the changing nature of the prison population in some areas".

They argued that this would serve to address the "backlog of parole reports within the system, due to under funding and workforce issues".

It was noted by social work leaders that the MoU was to have been reviewed following its inception, but this did not happen. SPS leaders confirmed that there were no plans to review the MoU at present due to the view that a more fundamental reform of prison-based social work arrangements was required.

Commissioning arrangements were viewed as more effective by some partners with experience of operating in a private prison. Different contractual arrangements and performance reporting frameworks were noted, which were perceived to be clearer. Also worth noting were the MoU arrangements for the new community custody settings for women. This included an additional annexe within the MoU containing a "situation, background, assessment and recommendation" analysis not found in the standard MoU. This supported a more bespoke and responsive approach when additional resources were required to meet particular needs.

For the majority of partners however, the status quo was not viewed as an option. There was an appetite for further review to inform a fundamental reform of current arrangements. Given its responsibilities for national justice policy and strategy and the allocation of funding, the Scottish Government was identified as uniquely placed to co-ordinate and oversee any agreed reforms. This would include the co-ordination of cross-cutting strategic groups such as the funding review group[3], the transformational change programmes[4], and the prison population leadership group[5].

[2] Section 27 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 covers the "Supervision and care of persons put on probation or released from prisons etc." Section 27 and subsequent sections make provision for the related grant funding. This is the key funding received annually from Scottish Government which is allocated to local authorities to pay for justice social work services

[3] Established by the Scottish Government in 2021, this group considers issues relating to community justice funding and how it is distributed. It includes consideration of the impact of Covid-19 on justice social work services and the third sector, and will recommend possible improvements.

[4] The transformational change programmes reflect the priorities of Scottish Government ministers and the wider justice sector as a subset of work which aims to deliver some of the outcomes set out in the Vision for Justice (2022). One of the programmes includes "shifting the balance between custody and community".

[5] This group was established in 2023 by the Scottish Government. It comprises senior representatives from the justice sector and beyond. It aims to identify long- and short-term options to address the challenges presented by the increased prison population and ensure a collective response.

Policies, procedures and guidance

The arrangements for delivery of social work services in Scottish prisons are set out in the Circular SEJD 12/2002 (revised May 2004): Throughcare provision for long term prisoners and prisoners subject to supervised release orders. The function of prison-based social work is described here as providing continuity of risk and need assessments, and the sharing of relevant information between prison and the community and across disciplines and agencies.

The Scottish Government produces standards that are intended to support the quality and consistency of social work practice. The National Outcomes and Standards for Social Work in the Criminal Justice System (2010) updated some elements of prison-based social work practice. However, prison-based social work continues to rely on the significantly outdated National Objectives for Social Work Services in the Criminal Justice System: Standards – Throughcare (2004). These are currently being updated. The Scottish Government is also currently working with stakeholders to scope a review and update the 2010 standards, which is welcomed.

In addition, there is a wide range of policies, procedures and guidance covering key processes involving prison-based social work services. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Integrated Case Management Guidance (2007)
- Framework for Risk Assessment, Management and Evaluation (2011)
- Process for LS/CMI use in Prison and Throughcare and Alignment with Integrated Case Management Guidance Manual (2012)
- Standards and Guidelines for Risk Management (2016)
- Risk Management, Progression, and Temporary Release Guidance (2018)
- Throughcare Assessment for Release on Licence (2021)
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA): National Guidance (2022)
- Parole Board for Scotland - Guidance for Members (2023).

Over the past two decades, various addendums and amendments had been made to this suite of guidance. However, there had been no systematic review to evaluate their alignment and efficacy in promoting rehabilitation and reintegration. Some partners felt that prison-based social work relied too much on outdated guidance and circulars that were no longer fit for purpose.

In addition to national legislation and guidance, each prison-based social work team was governed by its own local authority's policies and procedures. This included child and adult protection responsibilities. The majority of staff reported that they were familiar with these local expectations and confident in fulfilling them.

Progression of people from custody back into the community relied on effective multi-agency collaboration between key partners as laid out in relevant guidance. Prison-based social work staff were generally clear on their roles and responsibilities for risk assessment, management, and progression. In this regard, they were informed by more appropriate guidance and frameworks. That said, despite the Risk Management, Progression, and Temporary Release Guidance (2018) outlining the respective roles of prison-based social work and prison psychology, there remained some uncertainty within these services as to who held responsibility for key tasks.

There were also issues with the consistency of language when considering risk. At times, this had contributed to a lack of consensus about the measures required to manage risk and need in the community, and a lack of assurance on practice. This was commensurate with the findings of HMIPS' thematic review of prisoner progression (soon to be published). As the Care Inspectorate also commented in the Community Justice Social Work: Throughcare Review (2021), maintaining a shared understanding of the language of risk in accordance with the framework for risk assessment, management and evaluation (FRAME) was crucial to best practice. The Risk Management Authority had recently announced a review of FRAME, which was welcomed by all partners.

There was recognition across all partners with a role in progression that the various policies, procedures, and guidance were driven by critical dates based on the length of a person's sentence. This contributed to peaks in demand within prison-based social work services which impacted upon their ability to respond quickly. This was often despite prison-based social work being aware of these critical dates in advance. This created delays in the completion of risk assessments in some establishments for some people. For example, a recent SPS prisoner journey audit recorded that out of 30 cases reviewed, 17 did not have the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) completed for the initial integrated case management case conference. Delays in the LS/CMI being completed at this stage can impact on other key processes, including access to programmes and progression. A greater emphasis on individualised risk and needs-based planning was viewed as offering opportunities for potentially more effective targeting of resources and aiding progression.

Social Work Scotland and other partners developed and introduced the new throughcare assessment for release on licence (TARL) process in 2021. This process produces an integrated parole board report prepared jointly by prison-based and community-based social work for people serving long-term sentences. The intention of this was to increase collaboration and joint working between prison and community-based social work. The timescale for producing the TARL report was also increased from six to 12 weeks. This was to strengthen risk assessment, risk management and the overall quality of parole reports. As yet, there had been no evaluation of whether it had achieved these aims. Prison-based social work welcomed the potential improvements to joint working with community-based social work. However, the process was viewed as having brought additional workload pressures which had not been reflected by any increase in resources.

The Parole Board for Scotland's Guidance for Members (2023) was comprehensive and detailed, and included reference to the role of social work. It also highlighted the application of the 'Osborn' ruling (2013). The judgment in this case

fundamentally changed the way the parole boards across the UK must view the concept of oral hearings. It therefore significantly broadened the circumstances in which the law requires them to be held. This ruling had contributed to a significant increase in the number of oral hearings requested by the board. This had implications for prison and community-based social work staff who were regularly required to attend and give evidence at oral hearings, sometimes without sufficient notice. This increased workload was not supported by an increase in resources and was having an adverse impact on staff morale. Social work staff in prison and community settings were required to commit significant time, and often experienced hearings as adversarial in nature. This was also a finding in the Care Inspectorate's Throughcare Review report (2021). Although these issues were regularly raised with social work, SPS and parole board leaders, there had been no real change.

Additionally, the forthcoming Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023 will place a duty on partners, including local authorities, to extend their engagement in release planning. This will include people on remand and serving short-term sentences, as well as those serving long-term sentences. This represents a significant shift in policy and practice for both prison-based and community-based social work. The Act also contains provisions for the creation of new guidance in this regard, as well as throughcare support standards for all relevant agencies. Social work leaders remained uncertain and concerned about what further impact the new Act might have on prison-based social work resources.

5. Leadership

Strategic vision for prison-based social work services

As previously mentioned, the Vision for Justice (2022) makes no explicit reference to the work of prison-based social work services or their contribution to delivering on the intended outcomes. The MoU had yet to be updated to reflect the new vision.

It was positive that the majority of respondents to our prison-based social work staff survey agreed that there was a clear vision for their service at a local level. In contrast, there was consensus amongst respondents and partners that there was no clear national vision for prison-based social work services.

Many social work leaders held a holistic vision across social work and the wider justice system, including prison-based social work. Having a prison in their local authority area was viewed as an asset by some managers. They felt this provided opportunities for social work services to contribute meaningfully to a person's journey through the justice system and make a difference to their personal outcomes. However, overall, prison-based social work leaders were not routinely involved or consulted on the development of strategy, direction planning or decision-making for prison-based social work at national or local levels.

Most partners, including people in custody and prison-based social work staff, were of the view that the role of prison-based social work was often not well understood. Services were not sufficiently visible within many establishments. This was compounded by the lack of overall vision for the service.

All partners were of the view that realignment of the vision and purpose for prison-base social work was required to shift focus on to shared objectives. There was a consensus that this realignment should be driven by the collective efforts of the Scottish Government, the SPS, and justice social work representatives.

Strategy and direction

There was a significant gap in ownership of strategy and direction for prison-based social work services at a national level. This was despite a range of national bodies involved in leadership. All partners agreed that prison-based social work (and justice social work services more widely) lacked a collective voice or real influence.

In terms of shaping strategy and direction, Section 6 of the MoU formally lays out principles of joint liaison and leadership between SPS, Social Work Scotland, and the local authority. Social Work Scotland was recognised and valued for its commitment and dedication to representing justice social work and prison-based social work services. This was at a national level and within regular meetings with SPS headquarters personnel. However, all partners recognised the limitations of Social Work Scotland's role. This was both in terms of resource constraints and the lack of a statutory basis by which to influence strategy and service delivery across 32 local authorities. Social Work Scotland was viewed by the SPS as having more of a brokering role rather than being able to instruct strategic direction and delivery of services.

There was consensus that current leadership roles were not sufficiently defined or linked. The Scottish Government directs legislation and policy that impacts on partners, their staff and people receiving a service. Other national bodies including Community Justice Scotland, the Risk Management Authority, and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) also had leadership responsibilities and set expectations for prison-based social work. The office of the chief social work adviser within the Scottish Government was viewed as a potentially influential role in representing the interests of prison-based social work but needed to be more visible in this regard.

The role of the Risk Management Authority in leading the direction of risk practice, assurance and training for the sector was particularly recognised and highly valued by partners. However, as noted earlier, all partners expressed concern that the application and understanding of FRAME among relevant partners was not always consistent. This contributed to difficulties in collaborative working across establishments.

SPS leaders experienced challenges in their attempts to work collaboratively and consistently across 32 local authorities, 29 community justice areas, and 17 establishments to achieve consistency in practice. This was due to them being a national organisation, with no equivalently influential national body to negotiate with. Where there had been disputes or disagreement between SPS and prison-based social work or justice social work more widely, these at times had to be escalated to the Scottish Government. Partners reported inconsistencies in the messages from leadership at SPS headquarters level and leadership at a local establishment level. Social work leaders advised that they tended to address issues through local SPS leadership, often through heads of offender outcomes.

All partners were in agreement that the changing demographics of the prison population and resultant increased demands on prison-based social work services were not routinely taken into account by leaders. There was a perception among some social work leaders that they were viewed as an add-on service and therefore not prioritised by the SPS in strategic planning. Changes were therefore experienced as reactive, rather than as a result of informed and collaborative planning by leaders to address new developments or emerging concerns. This was compounded by a perception that prison-based social work services were continuously having to justify their role and required resources to the SPS. Social work leaders felt that the role and identity of prison-based social work needed to be clearer and better understood. They believed this would allow them to be a full partner in the development of strategy and direction.

Positively, in the most recent developments across the women's estate, the SPS and social work leaders had engaged in some joint strategic planning on what was expected and required for effective social work practice in these settings. This had usefully informed early service design considerations, the effectiveness of which was demonstrated at an operational level in the women's community custody units. Nonetheless, key SPS strategies such as those relating to women and young people did not specifically mention the role of prison-based social work. There was an implicit assumption that social work was involved in the key processes such as progression. However, there was a general absence of meaningful social work involvement and consultation in the development of these strategies. This was

despite the bearing they had on the day-to-day practice of prison-based social work. At a local level, some SPS and social work leaders reported good relationships between leaders and managers in establishments. These were characterised by strong communication and a shared understanding of expectations. Justice social work service managers retained clear leadership for their prison-based social work teams. They strived to ensure that prison-based social work had parity of professional identity with their community-based justice social work colleagues.

Social work leaders advised that most community justice partnership arrangements included local SPS leaders but that prison-related activity was not a significant component of community justice outcome improvement plans. The focus of community justice partnerships was seen to be early intervention, community disposals, and effective resettlement and reintegration, including housing, which relied on local authority resources and strategy. This resulted in a view that prison-based social work services were not prioritised at a local strategic level. Justice social work service managers reported mixed experiences in terms of the level of involvement of their chief social work officers in prison-based social work and wider justice social work matters. Some found them to be very involved and supportive, while others did not. This echoed the views of some other justice partners in that there did not seem to be the same priority focus given to prison-based social work services that other social work services were given across partnerships.

There was a consensus across all partners that there was a lack of collective leadership and influence for prison-based social work at a national level. This meant there was a lack of shared vision and aims and a lack of consistency in the translation of national strategies and policies at an operational level. This ultimately contributed to the potential for inequitable outcomes for people in custody.

Collaborative leadership and planning

Most prison-based social work staff recognised their team managers and senior justice social work managers as being responsible for leadership of the service and brokering partnership working. There was also some recognition of staff's own individual responsibilities in supporting and developing partnership working.

Central to collaborative leadership was a sense of shared values, vision, and purpose between partners, or at least an understanding of these. The majority of respondents to the prison-based social work staff survey believed there was a shared purpose, vision, and values between: prison-based social work and SPS management; programmes staff; integrated case management teams, the risk management team; prison psychology; offender management colleagues; and substance use colleagues. This contributed to a perception of strong partnership working with these partners. The Parole Board for Scotland also believed it shared a vision and understanding with prison-based social work. It noted their professionalism and that the quality of reports were generally of a high standard. Nevertheless, other partners identified a need for improvement in the overall quality of reports and consistent quality assurance of these.

Less robust connections were experienced between prison-based social work services and health services in prisons. The majority of survey respondents disagreed that they shared a purpose, vision, or values. Less than half believed that

the work of prison-based social work was valued by health services.

A shared purpose, vision and values between prison-based social work and community-based justice social work services was noted by almost all respondents to the staff survey. This was a significant strength and indicated confidence in their respective roles and responsibilities in collaboratively working with people in custody. Most respondents to the survey also believed that the prison-based social work role was valued by their community-based justice social work colleagues. A majority felt well-connected to their local community-based social work service. This was in contrast to less than half of respondents feeling well-connected to justice social work services at a national level. This supported the view that there was a stronger vision for prison-based social work services at a local level than at a national level.

There was consensus that prison-based social workers were generally managing to maintain their core social work values. Respondents viewed themselves as having a responsibility to advocate for people in custody when any clashes in values with other professionals had an impact on people. Working in a secondary setting, prison-based social work staff and leaders recognised the challenges of upholding social work values in a prison. Clashes of values with some SPS colleagues was, at times, a barrier to collaborative working.

Collaborative leadership between SPS and prison-based social work was often dependent on the relationship and communication between key SPS personnel within establishments, including deputy governors and governors. However, difficulties arose when there were personnel changes. There had previously been a lead within SPS for social work. Social work partners felt that this role fostered a stronger sense of collaborative working between SPS and prison-based social work. This post was no longer in place and social work leaders experienced this as a significant gap. However, SPS leaders were less certain of the usefulness of this role, advising that it was not something that they intended to fund in the future.

At a strategic level, partnership working had been impeded by a lack of mutual understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities between partners. Existing mechanisms for joint strategic planning, such as meetings between SPS headquarters and Social Work Scotland, had limitations. For example, in the development of consistent implementation of agreed strategies across the prison estate and all local authorities.

An example of where a lack of collaborative strategic planning had an impact on the delivery of prison-based social work services was the limited communication of changes in the management of the prison population. Prison-based social work services had not always been informed with sufficient notice of intentions to move prisoners with different gender, need or risk profiles between prisons. This resulted in insufficient time to consider and jointly plan for the demands on services. This included consideration of the specialist skills and staff numbers required.

6. Accountability

Effective use and management of resources

All partners recognised that the prison-based social work role was complex and multifaceted, with many essential and interlinked responsibilities. A key priority for most social work staff was collaborating with partners on public protection by assessing risk through relationship-based practice, including consideration of actual and potential victims. Some partners, including some social work leaders, believed the role of prison-based social work was to primarily undertake risk assessments and reports. There was recognition that this did not necessarily align with the aspirations held by all prison-based social work leaders and staff. Otherwise, there was no real consensus among partners on what the key role and aims of prison-based social work services should be.

Significant pressure on resources impacting on the ability of prison-based social work to complete tasks effectively and timeously was a strong and repeated theme from all partners. In a few prison-based social work services, there had been delays in the delivery of critical work such as LS/CMI assessments and parole reports. This impacted on decision-making for the progression of people in custody.

The majority of social work staff intimated that they did not have sufficient time to build relationships with people. Social worker activity was focused on priority assessment, caseload management, and report-writing. For some, this compromised relationships with prisoners and impacted negatively on effective contributions to key case management and progression processes. Social work also highlighted the insufficiency of in-house IT systems, and a continued reliance on paper files. This was viewed as significantly hampering the capacity of both SPS and social work to jointly contribute to case management, report on activity outcomes, and undertake informed workforce planning. A specific example was the migration of prison-based social work IT to a web-based system, which was perceived to be not fit for purpose and impacting on day-to-day work.

Where teams and individual workers were successfully creating opportunities to work more frequently with people on a planned basis, this was acknowledged in the positive experiences we heard from some people in custody.

As mentioned, prison-based social work services form part of a wider system, with each part impacting the other. The pressures experienced by other services, such as prison psychology, were also highlighted. Combined, these inevitably impact on the capacity of the whole system to efficiently contribute to effective progression management for people in custody.

Potential expansion of the prison-based social work role

Despite the increasing pressures, some partners suggested that there were opportunities to broaden the social work role in prisons in order to achieve better outcomes for people in custody. This was in line with some wider policy drivers. For example, the role of social work in prisons being enhanced to better address people's wider health and social care needs. A New Vision for Social Care in

Prisons (University of Dundee, 2018; commissioned by the Scottish Government) and the Integrated health and social care in prisons tests of change: workstream findings and recommendations (Social Work Scotland, 2020) highlighted the case for the role of social work in prisons to be enhanced or extended due to the complex health and social care needs of the prison population. A key recommendation was:

"The Memorandum of Understanding between SPS and the local authorities on prison-based social work and the connections with the integrated authority, as well as the role of social work within prisons more widely, should be reviewed to establish and promote a more cohesive approach to social work in prisons in the future".

The report was published during the pandemic, which made it challenging for the recommendations to be implemented. However, the findings from the report were incorporated to some extent in the provisions around social care in prisons in the proposed National Care Service (Scotland) Bill (2022)[6]. Relatedly, the Scottish Government's Prison Social Care Improvement Programme 2023 – 2025 seeks to establish an integrated, consistent social care service in prisons equivalent to community provision. Exploration of the role of social work in prisons remains a key element of this workstream.

Ongoing considerations around the National Care Service ultimately offer opportunities to consider how social work practice in both community and custodial settings align to their counterparts in community health and across prison health and social care. All partners recognised, however, that any wholesale broadening of the prison-based social work role would require significant additional resource, as well as buy-in from leaders and staff.

That said, there were many examples provided in the staff survey of prison-based social work in some establishments already undertaking a range of tasks beyond risk assessments and the preparation of reports. These included:

- training prison officers in child and adult protection
- supporting prisoners in equality and diversity matters, including advocating for their rights and challenging discrimination
- supporting and monitoring pregnant women and women with children in custody
- involvement in local homelessness initiatives
- redeveloping a prison throughcare service.

These additional responsibilities were not all covered by the MoU nor included in key strategy or planning by leaders. Reviews of the changing requirements of prison-based social work were happening in a few individual establishments, but were limited by insufficient mechanisms to gather, report and analyse data. This meant that the resource impact of additional tasks beyond the MoU was not fully

[6] The Bill establishes the National Care Service, which aims to improve the quality and consistency of social services in Scotland. The Bill allows Scottish Government ministers to transfer social care responsibility from local authorities to a new, national service. This could include adult and children's services, as well as justice social work.

understood by the SPS.

There was recognition that prison-based social work services in the newer SPS establishments across the women's estate were better able to focus on relationship-based practice and work holistically and in trauma-informed ways to identify and address needs and risks. This was driven at a strategic level by the SPS' Women's Strategy. While recognising that there were fewer women in custody than men, these new developments offered opportunities for improvement across the wider prison estate.

Social work and SPS leaders would welcome a shift in the focus for prison-based social work services to enable them to work more holistically with people in custody across the entire estate, supported by sufficient resources. Nonetheless, the SPS highlighted that the onus was not just on prison-based social work to provide support. The key role of the third sector in working with people in custody was emphasised. Further, the upskilling of SPS staff to work in person-centred ways was viewed as important in supporting people throughout their sentence.

Overall, the absence of a clear leadership and governance structure, where leaders have the specialist social work knowledge, responsibility, and authority to review and deploy resources nationally, was recognised by all partners.

Performance management and quality assurance

Prison-based social work managers were expected to complete monthly data returns to evidence performance against the responsibilities outlined in the MoU. They reported they were in the main completing these. The collation and reporting of these quantitative measures were done manually by prison-based social work managers. This was due in part to the lack of functionality of the LS/CMI portal.

The Report on the Review of Closed Cases (2023) by the LS/CMI review group[7] made various linked recommendations to the Scottish Government. For example, that the LS/CMI IT system provider should ensure LS/CMI system reporting enables self-evaluation, quality assurance measures, and service planning for partners. The group updated the cabinet secretary for justice and home affairs in December 2023. The update confirmed that the system reporting functionality was being developed, alongside revised LS/CMI governance arrangements to guide future development work. This work is welcomed.

All partners were in agreement that the data gathered and submitted to the SPS by prison-based social work services was not useful. The accompanying data capture document was described as not fit for purpose. It did not support performance monitoring in any meaningful way. There was also an over-reliance on quantitative rather than qualitative data. As a result, the data gathered did not provide a true reflection of the range or quality of work undertaken by prison-based social work.

The MoU also included an expectation of monthly meetings between SPS heads of offender outcomes and prison-based social work managers. The purpose of this

[7] This group was convened in 2022 by the Risk Management Authority at the request of the Scottish Government due to the identification of a national LS/CMI system issue.

was to review the data submitted by prison-based social work and identify any arising issues, in order to confirm payment for the service provided. These meetings were not happening consistently across all establishments. Where they did take place, in some establishments they were seen to facilitate positive communication between SPS and prison-based social work. However, they were universally not viewed as particularly meaningful by SPS and social work leaders. Where heads of offender outcomes and prison-based social work managers had a shared understanding of the expectations of the MoU, this was seen as offering more value.

Due to the reliance on prison-based social work self-reporting the data, neither the data nor the monthly meetings provided the anticipated assurance for the SPS and prison-based social work services. One establishment, by agreement between the SPS and the local authority, gathered additional data. This was used more meaningfully to inform collaborative decisions about resources required within that particular prison. This learning may be of interest to leaders across the wider sector in terms of agreeing meaningful, consistent approaches to performance reporting.

Periodic audits of prison-based social work performance were also expected in accordance with the MoU, but these were not happening with any consistency. This was due in part to ongoing resource pressures. There were no national audit templates or tools to assist this process, apart from those relating to specific risk assessments. Some prison-based social work services had developed their own audit tools, albeit based on outdated national guidance.

The SPS, the Risk Management Authority and other partners were not confident that management oversight and the quality assurance of risk assessments were being undertaken consistently in line with current guidance and standards. This was despite the existence of quality assurance tools for specific risk assessments. Robust quality assurance was also viewed as an important element of providing confidence in decision-making at risk management team meetings and other forums. To this end, the LS/CMI Review of Closed Cases (2023) report recommended that the Risk Management Authority should work with all relevant agencies to ensure that LS/CMI quality assurance templates are embedded within audit and evaluation processes to assist decision-making forums such as the risk management team. The Risk Management Authority recirculated the existing LS/CMI quality assurance templates to justice social work services in September 2023, with the intention to embed these across all relevant agencies.

Partners reported that SPS staff, particularly risk management team members and integrated case management staff, were not routinely trained in the principles of the LS/CMI assessment. This was despite the centrality of LS/CMI to social work's contribution to overall risk assessment, management, and planning. This was seen to limit some SPS staff's understanding and confidence in these assessments. This echoed the findings of the Care Inspectorate's Throughcare Review (2021). This noted that partners and groups with responsibility for the various aspects of LS/CMI should ensure training needs were appropriately addressed. This was also highlighted in HMIPS' forthcoming thematic review of prisoner progression in the context of risk management teams, where they recommended that the SPS and partners should develop a shared understanding of the use of risk assessment tools.

Performance frameworks and frequency of reporting in private prisons were viewed as more robust. Regular contract meetings assisted prison social work services to better evidence the demands on the service, and in successfully securing additional resources when required.

Significant case reviews were considered by some partners to be a driver for learning and subsequent improvement activity. These often led to recommendations at an operational level, but by their nature were reactive rather than embedding a culture of continuous improvement. Therefore, it was felt that they had little impact on driving improvement at a strategic level.

In the absence of a consistently used performance reporting mechanism, partners had no real assurance about the range and quality of the prison-based social work service being delivered. Improvements in this area would therefore be welcomed by all partners.

Improvement and change

The review noted that there was a series of multi-agency workstreams and activities that may impact on the direction and delivery of prison-based social work services. For example, the review of the National Objectives for Social Work Services in the Criminal Justice System Standards: Throughcare, and HMIPS' forthcoming review of progression. At the time of writing, it was too early for these developments to demonstrate any effect or improvements for prison-based social work.

The regular engagement between the SPS, Social Work Scotland and other key partners at a national level to drive improvement was viewed as positive by all. This often involved a significant investment of time by justice social work service managers and staff to drive and implement change, which was appreciated by partners.

Social Work Scotland's justice social work standing committee had a number of subgroups, including one specifically for throughcare. This was attended by social work staff from both community and prison settings at all levels. The group's purpose was to drive strategic and operational prison-based and community-based throughcare matters forward to support national consistency and improvement. Examples included the implementation of the throughcare assessment for release on licence (TARL) which leaders felt contributed to improvements in communication between prison-based and community-based social work. The group continued to identify and address any issues with the TARL following its roll-out. Nonetheless, the SPS and other partners felt that a significant overall barrier to effecting real change was the lack of a national social work leadership body with the statutory power to direct the implementation of any ratified changes.

A further significant barrier to driving improvement was the fact that the MoU between the SPS and local authorities had not been revised or updated to reflect the increased pressures on prison-based social work services. For example, the ageing prison population was noted as a significant issue by the SPS and social work leaders. Therefore, partners were not adapting service delivery in a planned way in response to changing profiles. This issue was also highlighted in HMIPS' thematic review of prisoner progression. They found that there had been no meaningful

review of the impact of the changing prison population on prison-based social work. Furthermore, partners advised that SPS financial constraints and flatline budgets placed significant limitations on the ability to invest in targeted improvement actions.

All partners recognised that in order for improvements to be made, there must be buy-in and action at an operational level across establishments. Communication of changes was raised as an issue. For example, a recent pilot process whereby the Risk Management Authority provided external secondary assurance for complex first grant of temporary release cases referred by the SPS. Social work leaders stated that this was not communicated well to them or their staff at operational levels, which led to implementation issues. Some prison-based social work leaders noted that capacity for improvement at a local level was limited without agreed priorities at a national level. An exception was the developments across the women's estate. These were generally viewed as a clear strength in terms of improvement, by responding to the specific needs of women in the justice system in line with national vision and strategy.

A forum for prison-based social work managers took place biannually, chaired by Social Work Scotland. This was viewed by some as very positive, and seen as assisting in driving improvement across the sector. That said, many prison-based social work managers were not aware that the forum continued to take place. In general, prison-based social work staff and leaders felt there was a lack of opportunities for peer support and mechanisms to share good practice across establishments and local authorities.

The role of Community Justice Scotland was highlighted, given their focus on improvement and change across the justice system and their role in providing training for prison-based social work staff. Some partners felt that Community Justice Scotland tended to focus on lower-level community interventions rather than driving improvement with people who might pose a higher risk, including those working with prison-based social work services. This was despite Community Justice Scotland's role in providing training and support in relation to risk assessment and interventions for people convicted of domestic and sexual offences.

All partners lacked clarity as to whether the development of the National Care Service would drive improvement for prison-based social work. A benefit of justice social work being included in the National Care Service was the potential for a 'national voice' for justice social work services. A potential benefit for the SPS was the possibility of streamlining communication to more effectively drive improvement and change Relatedly, the proposed National Social Work Agency[8] was viewed by some partners as a potential solution to driving engagement, improvement and consistency for social work services at national and local levels.

There was a desire among partners for the Scottish Government to assume more direct leadership of improvement and change. Some partners reflected very positively on the effectiveness of a previous tripartite group. This was an

[8] The Scottish Government's vision for the NCS includes provision in the Bill for the establishment of a National Social Work Agency, which will aim to provide national leadership, oversight, support, and opportunities for training and development for social work services (National Care Service (Scotland) Bill: Policy Memorandum (2022).

arrangement between the SPS, local authorities through the former Association of Directors of Social Work (which became Social Work Scotland), and the Scottish Government. This was established in 2001 to consider ways of strengthening partnership working between the three partners in order to improve arrangements for the transition of people from custody to the community. However, the group was discontinued. Not all partners were of the view that it was able to effectively influence change.

Partners ultimately expressed the urgent need for a wholesale review of prison-based social work leadership, governance, and accountability arrangements. There was a consensus that this should be through a multi-partner working group led by the Scottish Government, in order to take ownership of improvement and change.

Recruitment, deployment and joint working

Responses to the prison-based social work staff survey demonstrated an overall picture of committed staff who benefited from supportive supervision and strong team leadership. Prison-based social work teams comprised experienced practitioners, sometimes drawn from a range of other relevant social work backgrounds and equipped to deliver on their responsibilities.

All partners, including the SPS and the Parole Board for Scotland indicated that the wealth of skills, knowledge, and experience of prison-based social work in being able to address offending behaviour and reduce risk were not being fully deployed. Partners recognised that the role of prison-based social work in working with people serving long-term statutory sentences had become generally limited to risk assessment and report-writing. All partners felt that this contributed to prison-based social work staff feeling deskilled and undervalued. There were reports of elevated stress resulting from demands on capacity and the restrictive range of process-driven tasks taking up most of workers' time.

Despite the broad range of experience and skills noted within our survey, leaders found recruitment of prison-based social work staff to be challenging at times. There was a view from partners that prison-based social work was not always attracting suitably experienced professionals. This was due in part to a perception of limited opportunities to use social work knowledge and skills in the role. Bringing in new staff was seen as important in maintaining a positive culture within teams.

The SPS often expected rapid responsiveness and flexibility from prison-based social work services to meet the changing demands of the prison population. These expectations were not always mindful of the requirements of local authority recruitment processes and did not always give enough notice. The limitations of being able to move social work staff across local authority boundaries or within local authority justice social work services were at times unfavourably compared by the SPS to their greater flexibility as a national organisation.

Learning and development

Community Justice Scotland and the Risk Management Authority hold responsibilities for most prison-based social work training. Prison-based social work staff noted that they generally had access to an appropriate range of core training to

support them in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. However, staff did not always have timely access to particular training to undertake key tasks. Specifically, staff noted challenges in accessing training in specialist risk assessment tools, the Fundamentals of Risk Practice training provided by the Risk Management Authority, and risk practice refresher training. This reflected the findings of the Care Inspectorate's Throughcare Review (2021), which noted at that time that a clear learning and development pathway was required for staff with throughcare responsibilities, including access to risk practice training.

It was noted by some prison-based social work staff that, despite the positive developments across the women's estate commensurate training had not been provided. This was to account for the gender-specific specialist social work knowledge and skills required in these settings.

The Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) similarly highlighted the specialist knowledge and skills required for working with children and young people in custody. They had rolled out the Whole System Approach in HMP YOI Polmont and HMP YOI Stirling, and recognised opportunities for future joint training. This included exploring the possibility of increased prison-based social work staff involvement in initial custody reviews for young people up to the age of 21 entering custody. Staff survey respondents working in this setting demonstrated clear knowledge of the Whole System Approach in usefully informing their day-to-day work.

All partners recognised the benefits of joint multi-agency training to improve inter-agency communication, consistency of practice, and understanding of respective roles. Some areas had collaborated on strategies to deliver this locally. In some establishments, the Risk Management Authority had delivered joint training to multidisciplinary risk management team members. Partners reported that this improved alignment to guidance and a shared language when communicating risk. It was felt by partners that if this training were to be delivered to all risk management teams across Scotland, it could improve consistency.

While training opportunities on compiling parole reports and giving evidence at oral hearings and tribunals were available, awareness of their existence was limited among some prison-based social work staff. For example, staff from two local authorities had worked jointly with the Parole Board for Scotland to develop training videos for giving evidence at hearings and tribunals. The Parole Board for Scotland also responded to requests for training in preparing parole reports but noted that these requests mostly came from community-based social work. Overall, the publicising and sharing of available training and good practice occurring at local levels was limited.

The absence of an agreed strategic approach to national prison-based social work training limited opportunities to maximise learning and development. This gap was noted as relevant for further consideration by the strategic training provision group, led by Community Justice Scotland. This group included key partners such as Social Work Scotland, the Risk Management Authority, and the Scottish Government. It offered a strategic forum for formulating policy and operational responses to training needs for justice social work staff and other community justice practitioners. Community Justice Scotland intended to undertake a training needs

analysis of the justice social work services workforce, which would include a separate analysis of the specific training needs of the prison-based social work workforce. This intention was welcomed. The findings of this thematic review will also further inform the work of the group.

Relatedly, the LS/CMI review group report on the Review of Closed Cases (2023) recommended that the Risk Management Authority work with Community Justice Scotland and all agencies represented on the LS/CMI review group to analyse training needs relating to the application of the FRAME approach. This was being progressed by a recently-formed Risk Management Authority multi-agency training strategy yet to be published.

In addition, the development work around the proposed National Social Work Agency included a workstream relating to workforce, education, and training. This had a focus on recruitment, retention and enhanced training options and opportunities for social work in Scotland. Resources to support these system improvements were still to be quantified and identified. Further, the Scottish Government's office of the chief social work adviser, the Social Work Education Partnership, and partners including the SSSC were developing an advanced social work practice framework. This aimed to establish developmental pathways for all social workers in Scotland, operating in any setting. These workstreams offered opportunities for the specific needs of prison-based social work services to be taken into account as part of future workforce development activities.

Operational support for prison based social work

Effective line management ensured that almost all staff survey respondents were supported and appropriately held accountable for their work. Access to professional supervision assisted them to understand and meet the expectations of their role. The robust approach to line management was commended by the SPS and highlighted as an example of good practice which they would wish to emulate.

For prison-based social work managers, having a service manager with direct knowledge and experience of the challenges of operating in a prison setting was noted as a strength. This was viewed as providing well-informed support and focus on the service.

There were examples at a local level of justice social work services promoting opportunities to encourage staff to work in both community and prison-based settings. This was either as a hybrid role, or on a rotational basis. A few of the staff survey respondents noted that their role was split between community-based and prison-based social work teams. Partners perceived that this served to improve knowledge and understanding of both roles. This was seen as contributing to more effective planning for people during their sentence and preparing for release.

7. Impact and experience of prison-based social work services

Gathering the views and experiences of people with living experience of prison-based social work services was central to our review. It must be noted that the views outlined were based on people's own personal experiences and perceptions of the service they received. Scrutiny of the quality of prison-based social work practice was outwith the scope of this phase of the review. As such, we were unable to validate these experiences at an individual level. Future scrutiny will focus on the efficiency and impact of social work practice.

The strengths and areas for improvement noted at strategic levels and by prison-based social work staff were strongly echoed by the people in custody and on licence that we consulted. This was significant.

Some people in custody found their prison-based social worker very accessible, characterised by frequent contact and good, open, supportive, and caring relationships. This was a particularly strong finding from the women's community custody units. In these settings, prison-based social workers often checked in with the women on an ad hoc basis, rather than initiating contact only at critical dates. This allowed more meaningful relationships to develop and a perception from women that there were fewer barriers to progression. In these settings, people reported that prison-based social workers also tended to have useful links with their personal officers. This provided more holistic support and continuity.

Where collaborative practice was working well, people in custody told us that they felt well-informed about the management of their sentence. They believed this fostered mutual trust, contributing to better overall outcomes for them. The majority of prison-based social work staff across all establishments reported that they felt valued by the prisoners they were working with.

That said, the majority of people with experience of prison-based social work services that we spoke with did not feel they had enough contact with their prison-based social worker. Some people were unsure how to contact prison-based social work services. Most felt there was a significant lack of visible, accessible information around establishments about the service.

Many people felt their prison-based social worker did not have enough time to build a relationship. Other than staff leaving the team or them moving establishments, it was difficult for them to understand why they could not retain the same allocated worker throughout their journey in custody. As a result, people felt that they had to repeat their personal stories several times to different workers.

Most people advised that they usually only had contact with their prison-based social worker when critical dates or processes were approaching. They reported that they would value more regular check-ins. They echoed the perception of other partners, including social work services themselves, that they were task-oriented. They expressed surprise that social workers in prisons were not operating in the way that they would expect 'traditional' social workers to work, for example having less emphasis on their overall welfare. Many people felt this was because there were not enough social workers in prisons. People expressed a view that prison-based social

work should also be involved in programme work with them to help address waiting lists. Some people expressed their perceptions of major differences between establishments in terms of the level and quality of the service they received.

There was also significant conflation of the prison-based and community-based social work role. People were not always clear about the distinct roles and who was responsible for what. They had not heard of key developments in collaborative report-writing such as the throughcare assessment for release on licence (TARL). Some people had had positive experiences of their prison-based and community-based social worker working together effectively throughout their sentence. Others had fewer positive experiences and felt there was no connection or consistency between prison-based and community-based social work.

Most people felt risk assessments and release plans were not properly explained to them. Some people reported that the lack of contact with their prison-based social worker throughout their sentence meant that information about them within reports or at risk management team meetings often came as a surprise.

Some people felt prison-based social work held a significant amount of power and this was not always balanced. As such, they often felt unable to raise or address issues. They believed it might lead to them being perceived as anti-authority or hostile, and therefore hinder their progression.

The importance of addressing trauma was recognised. People with living experience of custody felt prison-based social workers should be better equipped to deal with the impact of trauma. This was particularly when discussing adverse experiences for the purpose of reports. The SPS expressed its commitment for all staff to become trauma-informed.

Particular challenges were highlighted for prisoners who were foreign nationals awaiting deportation. They tended not to be allocated a community-based social worker in some areas but were allocated a prison-based social worker. They felt the prison-based social work role could have offered them support, but the very limited contact with them was a barrier to this.

Overall, the reported impact of these less positive experiences was an increase in stress, adding to mental health difficulties, and decreased motivation for some prisoners. Reflecting some of what we heard from partners, people with experience of prison-based social work services felt that areas for improvement related to:

- more prison-based social workers
- more contact with prison-based social workers to allow increased opportunities to build relationships
- greater transparency in their role and risk assessments
- better communication and following up on actions
- being able to challenge reports or decisions more equitably

- opportunities to provide feedback on the service they receive
- greater awareness of and access to social work support in prisons.

SPS leaders referred to an ongoing workstream to introduce targeted integrated case management. This aimed to focus resources on people who would benefit from increased support, based on assessed risk and need. HMIPS' review of prisoner progression (2024) noted that a more targeted approach to integrated case management case conferences may be more purposeful. This approach might also mean less frequent contact with prison-based social workers for people subject to these arrangements. A more targeted approach to case conferences may offer the potential to be more purposeful. In light of the findings from this review, the SPS and partners recognised the importance of not decreasing opportunities for prison-based social workers to build and sustain relationships with people in custody throughout their sentence.

Families

In terms of prison-based social work services' role with prisoners' families, most partners reported that they had a limited role but that more could be made of this. People in custody and other organisations would value prison-based social work introducing themselves to family members and maintaining more contact in order to keep them informed. This was in recognition of the important role in supporting people's transition from custody that families can often have. Partners felt that the impact of imprisonment of children should also be recognised and addressed more directly by prison-based social work services and leaders. Where there was family involvement, contact with them was viewed as particularly pertinent when setting realistic licence conditions. It was noted by partners that contact with families was usually undertaken by the person's allocated community-based social worker, as per guidance and practice. Just under half of the prison-based social work survey respondents felt their work was valued by prisoners' families. This highlighted opportunities to better understand this issue with a view to improving families' perception and experience of the service.

Value of prison-based social work

SPS strategic leaders demonstrated strong understanding, respect, and support for prison-based social work services and their role and value in prisons. It was recognised by all partners that prison-based social work services had specialist skills, knowledge, and experience that was an asset to their work. The SPS was supportive of prison-based social work being able to utilise these skills in programme work. However, it recognised that these opportunities had become limited due to the MoU and the ever-increasing pressure on prison-based social work resources.

Positively, prison-based social work staff agreed that their work was valued by most key stakeholders. This included the SPS, psychology colleagues, the Parole Board for Scotland, and people in custody. However, only a third of staff agreed that the work of prison-based social work was valued by the Scottish Government.

Despite some of the positive staff survey results, some social workers and prison-based social work managers still perceived that the service was not valued equitably

with other services in the prison, such as prison psychology. Examples provided to illustrate this sense of inequity were a lack of access to meeting spaces in some establishments, poor environmental conditions, and differential IT systems. These were viewed as having a significant negative impact on their day-to-day work and efficiency. Further, some social work leaders noted that at an establishment level, the SPS at times made unfavourable comparisons to other prison-based social work services. This eroded morale and created division and tension.

As previously noted, the absence of clear assurance mechanisms also contributed to challenges in prison-based social work services being able to demonstrate the range and quality of their work and ultimately, a more tangible sense of value.

8. Conclusions

National and local leaders responsible for prisons and social work services face difficult choices if they are to successfully deliver on the intention to shift the balance between the use of custody and community justice. This review considered the direction of prison-based social work services within the context of the changing prison population, resource constraints, and competing, often increasingly complex, demands.

Prison-based social work services were seen as essential to protecting the public and supporting change for people serving sentences and subject to statutory social work supervision upon release. Prison-based social work staff were strongly committed to protecting the public and fulfilling their statutory responsibilities through the provision of effective services. This was an important strength. Nevertheless, prison-based social work services and their justice partners faced considerable pressures working within fragmented systems, to outdated and ineffective guidance, and with a lack of sufficiently clear leadership. A key area of improvement related to how prison social work services were commissioned and the limitations and inconsistencies with the MoU arrangements.

The inadequacies of these arrangements became particularly acute when faced with a record high prison population, increasingly complex needs and risks, and funding arrangements not being routinely reviewed and updated to keep pace with change. Existing assurance mechanisms were of limited use and offered very little assurance to national or local partners with responsibility for monitoring and improving prison-based social work performance. The quality assurance process and measures that did exist were not used consistently or routinely. This made it difficult for prison-based social work services to demonstrate their value and professional standing within the secondary setting of a prison. As a result, the MoU was no longer seen as fit for purpose.

Where things were working well, this was often in spite of the governance arrangements and the MoU, with some exceptions. Well-established relationships between prison-based social work and the SPS resulted in some positive collaboration at a local level. More recent arrangements across the women's estate were viewed as more efficient and effective. This offered opportunities to do things differently and better.

Gaps remained in national strategic workforce planning and training for prison-based social work, including joint training. It was recognised by all partners that the skillset of such a specialised and often highly experienced staff group was not being used to best effect to support rehabilitation and desistance from offending. There were ambitions and aspirations to expand the prison-based social work role to meet the wider needs of people in prison, their families and children. This is unlikely to be realised without a fundamental review to reach agreement on the vision, role and responsibilities of a contemporary prison-based social work service.

There was a universal consensus across all partners that fundamental reform was required in order to strengthen and improve the governance, leadership, and accountability arrangements for prison-based social work. A disconnect between

national and local arrangements meant change was not always effectively managed. As a result of a fragmented strategic landscape, there was a clearly held view that the necessary transformational change could only be delivered through better direction and co-ordination. Further, the needs of prison-based social work cannot be considered in isolation from the cross-cutting policy developments impacting wider justice social work services and prisons. As such, the Scottish Government was viewed by partners as having the appropriate authority and oversight to adopt a lead role in transformational change for prison-based social work services and justice social work services more widely.

Cultural change will be necessary if partners are to achieve their ambitions. This will require goodwill, flexibility, and an openness to doing things differently to the ultimate benefit of people in the justice system, their families, and people and communities affected by crime.

9. Areas for improvement

To better co-ordinate and direct improvements in the governance, leadership and accountability of prison-based social work, the Scottish Government, the SPS, and justice social work leaders should do the following.

- Agree the mechanism by which the necessary changes identified within this report and other related developments can be delivered. These include, but are not limited to:
    - reviewing the current funding and commissioning arrangements for prison-based social work, including a complete review of the MoU between the SPS and local authorities as a priority
    - reviewing the requested prison-based social work data to ensure this is fit for purpose and provides assurance on accountability and quality for all stakeholders. This includes collaboration on the development of nationally agreed, consistent quality assurance and audit tools for prison-based social work services and embedding these in relevant guidance
    - agreeing a clear national vision and aims for prison-based social work supported by a national structure to oversee the consistent delivery of services. This includes within any revision of relevant standards and guidance
    - taking account of and including prison-based social work and wider justice social work services in all relevant policy, strategy and direction planning that impacts on the delivery of prison-based social work services and their work with people in custody
    - identifying and communicating clear lines of accountability for continuous improvement and change for prison-based social work.
- With a view to increasing the visibility of their service and understanding of their role within establishments and more widely, local social work leaders should collaborate with the SPS to improve the professional standing of prison-based social work.
- To ensure a competent, confident, and well-trained workforce, the needs of prison-based social work staff should be reflected within any strategic approach to training and workforce planning. This also includes the establishment of opportunities for peer learning and support for prison-based social work staff and managers to reduce isolation.
- To support robust performance reporting and quality assurance, partners at a national and local level should ensure electronic recording systems are fit for purpose and used consistently to produce reliable data through which quantitative and qualitative results can be demonstrated.

10. Next steps

Having reviewed the strategic context in which prison-based social work services are operating, the next phase of our review will focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of prison-based social work practice. It will include looking at the collaboration between prison-based and community-based justice social work and the related outcomes for people in custody, their families, people affected by crime, and communities.

To this end, we will seek to establish a multi-partner steering group to inform our approach to the future scrutiny and assurance of prison-based social work. As well as representation from national and local stakeholders, the involvement of people with living experience of custody and throughcare will be essential to both the design and delivery of any future methodology, and in listening to their experiences.

We are aware that some of the key standards underpinning prison-based social work's roles and responsibilities are currently under review. As scrutiny bodies, it will be of benefit for any future scrutiny and assurance work to use the revised standards as a baseline for any inspection or self-evaluation activity.

Findings from other related workstreams will also need to be taken into account in any future scrutiny or reforms. For example, there are ongoing considerations around the National Care Service, the National Social Work Agency and the future arrangements for justice social work services (and therefore prison-based social work services) in this context. The findings and recommendations from HMIPS' thematic review of prisoner progression are also likely to bring about changes in the operational delivery of progression processes that will affect prison-based social work.

The prison-based social work staff survey we conducted was invaluable in providing detail on the range and complexity of the prison-based social work task. Our findings from the survey will therefore be key to informing the next phase of scrutiny activity. A fully anonymised summary of our survey findings will also be shared with justice social work leaders following the publication of this review report.

Appendix 1

How we conducted this review

Scoping meetings

We held scoping meetings with Social Work Scotland, the Risk Management Authority, Community Justice Scotland, the Scottish Government, and the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice. This was to gain an initial overview of the strengths and challenges for prison-based social work and to help shape the direction of the review.

Desktop review

We examined relevant documents pertaining to prison-based social work services. This included strategies, policies, procedures, guidance, findings from other relevant scrutiny and reviews, and quality assurance materials.

Staff survey

We distributed a link to our online staff survey to all prison-based social work team leaders, senior social workers, social workers, paraprofessionals, and business support staff across all establishments. We received 68 survey responses.

Focus groups and interviews with key partners

We held focus groups and interviews over MS Teams with SPS colleagues at strategic and operational levels, prison psychology, all justice social work service managers with a prison in their local authority, prison-based social work senior managers, the Parole Board for Scotland, and a third sector organisation. In total, 46 colleagues across these partner organisations contributed to seven focus groups and four interviews.

Consultation with people with living experience

Support from HMIPS and SPS colleagues enabled our review team to engage with people who had experience of working with prison-based social work services. In total, 32 people currently serving a long-term sentence contributed to six focus groups across four establishments. We also conducted a telephone interview with one person released on licence.

Final report

This report summarises the overall findings across the relevant quality indicators to highlight strengths, challenges and areas for improvement that may have national relevance. The quality indicators informing this report are outlined below (please also see Appendix 2).

- 2.1 Impact on people accused or convicted of offences
- 6.1 Policies, procedures and legal measures

- 6.2 Planning and delivering services collaboratively
- 6.4 Performance management and quality assurance
- 7.1 Recruitment, retention and joint working
- 7.2 Staff development and support
- 8.1 Effective use and management of resources
- 8.2 Commissioning arrangements
- 9.1 Vision, values and aims
- 9.2 Leadership of strategy and direction
- 9.3 Leadership of people and partnerships
- 9.4 Leadership of improvement and change

Guide to quantitative terms used in the report

Almost all	90% or more
Most	75% to 89%
Majority	50% to 74%
Less than half	35% to 49%
Some	15% to 34%
A few	14% or less

Limitations of methods used

Our focus was high-level and on direction with a view to reporting on the clarity of purpose, leadership and strategy for prison-based social work services in achieving their aims. As such, scrutiny of operational practice was outwith the scope of this phase of the thematic review. This will be central to any future scrutiny and assurance focused on the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of prison-based social work services.

The views from colleagues across partner organisations and people with living experience reflect only those who responded to the staff survey and took part in focus groups and interviews.

We sought to gather the views of a range of third and voluntary sector services by arranging focus group dates through the criminal justice voluntary sector forum, however organisations were unable to attend focus groups due to time pressures.

Appendix 2

The quality improvement framework

This report summarises the overall findings of the review across the quality indicators highlighted below.

What key outcomes have we achieved?	How well do we jointly meet the needs of our stakeholders?	How good is our delivery of community justice services?	How good is our management?	How good is our leadership?
1. Key performance outcomes	**2. Impact on people accused or convicted of offences, and people affected by crime.**	**5. Delivery of key processes**	**6. Policy, service development and planning**	**9. Leadership and direction**
1.1 Improving the life chances and outcomes of people with living experience of community justice	2.1 Impact on people accused or convicted of offences 2.2 Impact on victims of crime 2.3 Impact on families	5.1 Providing support when it is needed 5.2 Assessing and responding to risk and need 5.3 Planning and providing effective interventions 5.4 Involving people accused or convicted of offences, and people affected by crime	6.1 Policies, procedures, and legal measures 6.2 Planning and delivering services collaboratively 6.3 Participation of people accused or convicted of offences, people affected by crime, and other stakeholders 6.4 Performance management and quality assurance	9.1 Vision, values and aims 9.2 Leadership of strategy and direction 9.3 Leadership of people and partnerships 9.4 Leadership of improvement and change
	3. Impact on staff		**7. Management and support of staff**	
	3.1 Impact on staff		7.1 Recruitment, retention and joint working 7.2 Staff development and support	
	4. Impact on the communities		**8. Partnership working**	
	4.1 Impact on the community		8.1 Effective use and management of resources 8.2 Commissioning arrangements 8.3 Securing improvement through self-evaluation	
10. What is our capacity for improvement? Overall judgement based on an evaluation of the framework of quality indicators				

Appendix 3

Terms we use in this report

Accountability: assurance that an individual or organisation is evaluated on its performance or behaviour related to something for which it is responsible.

Best value: Local authorities in Scotland have a statutory duty to demonstrate best value, introduced by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. This means ensuring there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on continuous improvement to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public.

Care Inspectorate: the independent scrutiny, assurance and improvement support body for social care and social work in Scotland. Further information is available at: https://www.careinspectorate.com/

Chief social work adviser: leads the office of the chief social work adviser within the Scottish Government, advising ministers and policy teams with an interest or responsibility for aspects of social work services and practice across children and families, adult social care and justice social work.

Chief social work officer: a post held in every local authority to ensure the provision of effective, professional advice to elected members and officers in authorities' provision of social work services.

Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ): an organisation that works towards ensuring Scotland's approach to children and young people in conflict with the law is rights-respecting and contributing to better outcomes for children, young people and communities. Further information is available at: https://www.cycj.org.uk/

Community custody units: accommodation for women in custody to support the specific needs of women. The units allow closer community contact and access to local services to create and sustain independence in preparation for successful reintegration into the community.

Community justice outcomes improvement plans: plans setting out how community justice partners are achieving national and local outcomes.

Community justice partnerships: these comprise community justice partners as defined in the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016. They come together locally to assess the community justice-related needs of people and communities in their area and ensure that appropriate services and interventions are in place.

Community Justice Scotland: the national body with responsibility to promote the National Strategy for Community Justice. It is responsible for monitoring, promoting and supporting improvement in the performance, quality, and range of community justice, and keeping Scottish Government ministers informed about this. It also promotes public awareness of benefits arising from community justice. Further information is available at: https://communityjustice.scot/

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA): a councillor-led, cross-party organisation that champions the work of Scotland's local authorities and their 1,226 elected councillors. Further information is available at: https://www.cosla.gov.uk/

Criminal justice voluntary sector forum: a collaboration of voluntary sector organisations working in criminal justice in Scotland. Further information is available at: https://www.ccpscotland.org/cjvsf/

European Framework for Quality Management (EFQM) model: the globally recognised management framework that supports organisations in managing change and improving performance. Further information is available at: https://efqm.org/

First grant of temporary release: the process by which SPS risk management teams apply to Scottish Government ministers on behalf of people serving life sentences, who are otherwise prohibited from temporary release, to be released temporarily. For example, for work placements, unescorted day release, and home leave.

Framework for risk assessment, management and evaluation (FRAME): a framework developed in partnership with justice agencies which aims to develop a consistent and evidence-based approach to risk assessment and management.

Governance: a system that provides a framework for managing organisations. It identifies who can make decisions, who has the authority to act on behalf of the organisation and who is accountable for how an organisation and its people behave and perform.

Health and social care partnerships: integrated arrangements for health and social care across Scotland. All partnerships are responsible for adult social care, adult primary health care and unscheduled adult hospital care. Some are also responsible for children's services, homelessness, and justice social work services.

HMIPS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland): responsible for the inspection and monitoring of Scotland's 17 prisons and custody centres. Further information is available at: https://www.prisonsinspectoratescotland.gov.uk/

HMP & YOI Polmont: Scotland's national holding facility for young people aged between 16 - 21 years.

Initial custody review: a meeting held within 10 working days for children and young people entering custody on remand or who have been sentenced. The purpose of the review is to ensure that a plan is developed for the child or young person throughout their stay, including a plan for their release.

Integrated case management: a case management structure used by the Scottish Prison Service that brings together the prisoner and other key staff and agencies to assess the prisoner's progress through custody and to plan for release.

Leadership: a set of behaviours used to help people align their collective direction, to execute strategic plans, and continually renew an organisation.

Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI): a comprehensive risk/need assessment and management planning method for general offending used by justice social work services across Scotland.

Licence: certain people are released from prison into the community under conditions. Being on licence means they are still serving their sentence in the community and are subject to social work supervision.

MAPPA: the acronym for multi-agency public protection arrangements put in place to manage the risk posed by people subject to sex offender registration and notification requirements, and other people who pose a high risk of harm to people and communities.

Memorandum of understanding (MoU): the governance framework that details the arrangements for use of Scottish Government funding allocated to the SPS to pay for statutory social work services in prisons provided by relevant local authorities. It provides a comprehensive list of prison-based social work responsibilities, SPS responsibilities and any that are shared.

Office of the chief social work advisor: part of the Scottish Government, led by the chief social work adviser. They advise Scottish Government ministers and policy teams with an interest or responsibility for aspects of social work services and practice across children and families, adult social care and justice social work.

Parole Board for Scotland: a tribunal non-departmental public body, members of which are appointed by Scottish Government ministers. Its main aim is to ensure that people in prison who are no longer regarded as presenting a risk to public safety may serve the remainder of their sentence in the community on licence under the supervision of social work. The Parole Board for Scotland operates independently from the Scottish Government. Further information is available at: https://www.scottishparoleboard.scot/

Parole report: a report provided by prison-based and community-based social work to the Parole Board for Scotland to inform its decision-making about a person's release from custody.

Reintegration: upon release from custody, a person enhances social inclusion through maintaining supportive relationships and access to the opportunities and resources required to maintain desistance. As a result, the person is no longer a significant risk to others. A reduced risk of reoffending enables the person to focus on developing an offence-free lifestyle.

Risk Management Authority: a non-departmental public body established in 2005 by the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003. Its work is to reduce the risk of serious harm posed by violent and sexual offending. Further information is available at: https://www.rma.scot/

Risk management team: a multidisciplinary team of professionals representing a range of agencies involved in the management of people in custody. Its primary purpose is to consider the assessment, intervention and management needs of those referred through the integrated case management process. It is also the

decision-making body that considers progression to less secure conditions and/or community access.

Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC): the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland. Further information is available at https://www.sssc.uk.com/

Service level agreement: in place between the SPS and local authorities before the introduction of memorandums of understanding. The document constituted a form of agreement between the local authority and the SPS in which they agreed to provide the services outlined in the service level agreement to the SPS on the terms set out within it.

Significant case review: a multi-agency process for establishing the facts and learning lessons from a situation where a child has died or been significantly harmed.

The Social Work Education Partnership: The Social Work Education Partnership is a national partnership of key stakeholders across social work and social work education dedicated to shaping the future of social work education in Scotland.

Social Work Scotland: the professional leadership body for the social work and social care professions. Further information is available at https://socialworkscotland.org/

Third sector: an umbrella term that covers a range of different organisations with different structures and purposes, belonging neither to the public sector nor the private sector. It includes voluntary organisations, charities, social enterprises, and community groups.

Throughcare: describes the range of social work services provided to people in prison, and their families, from the point of sentence or remand in custody, during the period of imprisonment and following return to the community.

Trauma-informed practice: a strengths-based approach grounded in an understanding and responsiveness to the impact of trauma. It emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone and creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

Whole system approach: the Scottish Government's programme for addressing the needs of children and young people involved in offending.

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