Justice Committee

Scottish Government’s Draft Budget 2014-15

Written submission from the Scottish Prison Service

Thank you for the invitation to provide written evidence to the Committee about the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) Budget. I welcome the opportunity to provide the Committee with information on the budget priorities for the Service and to set out what we want to achieve with the money allocated to us.

Over the coming year, SPS will focus its resources on:

- maintaining the safe, decent and secure operation of the prison estate, opening HMP Grampian and completing the closure and disposal of HMPs Aberdeen and Peterhead;
- implementing the programme of change resulting from the SPS Organisational Review, including developing the role of the Prison Officer;
- expanding our work with partner organisations to improve continuity of service delivery as a means to reduce the risk of prisoners re-offending on release from custody;
- continue with the implementation of the recommendations from the Commission on Women Offenders, including ensuring suitable fit-for-purpose prison accommodation tailored for the needs of female prisoners; and
- taking forward work to plan the replacement of HMPs Barlinnie and Inverness.

We will, of course, continue to flex the resources allocated to the SPS to provide a range of services that will increasingly ‘target’ the specific needs of people in our custody. In addition to what we ‘normally’ provide, we aim to develop further opportunities to use our people as our key resources in new and innovative ways to maximise the SPS contribution to keeping our communities safe. However, before I outline some examples of the workstreams that will be taken forward in 2014-15 and beyond, it may be helpful if I set out the overall context and focus for SPS for the next year and equally importantly, the direction of travel for the next 3-5 years.

SPS Organisational Review

The Organisational Review Report, which will be published on 18 November, will set out a new Vision and Mission for the SPS, as well as revising SPS’ approach to enhancing the prospects for reduced re-offending. It will set out the road map for the change journey ahead and therefore, the priorities for the Service. A new ‘assets-based’ approach will incorporate increasing and improved focus on building individual potential through identifying and developing strengths, skills and abilities,
while recognising the importance of positive networks, resources and opportunities, both whilst in custody and in the community.

We will use the considerable skills of our staff differently. The Organisational Review has established that the high quality of existing relationships between prison officers and prisoners helps to maintain safe and orderly prisons; and that this 'asset' can also be used more expansively as a catalyst upon which work with prisoners to improve their life chances and thereby reduce recidivism on release can take place. This fresh approach envisages an up-shift in the professional skill base of prison officers to enable every interaction with a prisoner to be a positive opportunity for change. Staff in prisons will increasingly take on motivational, educative and advocacy roles which are more likely to unlock the potential for those with criminal histories to build on their existing capabilities and assets, and be more prepared to take up the range of opportunities made available to them whilst in custody; maintaining and strengthening links with their families and communities along the way. Therefore, a major workstream for SPS will be developing our people.

SPS is currently laying the groundwork to extend the role of prison officers. For example, ‘re-integration activity’ led by prison officers at HMP Greenock supports the opportunities being created by the newly formed mentorship schemes under the Reducing Re-offending Change Fund. There is increasing evidence that the presence of supportive, trusting and constructively challenging professional relationships supports desistance, and SPS will continue into next year and beyond to use the skills of our staff to work with the imprisoned through the transition from custody to community.

**Work streams for 2014-15 and beyond**

**HMP Grampian**

During the current financial year, work has progressed to develop HMP Grampian, as the first community-facing prison for those sent into custody, predominantly from the Northern Community Justice area, including men, women and young people.

The new prison has also provided an opportunity to work innovatively with local business enterprises (private, public and third sector alike) across the North East to provide work skills for offenders; the experiences gained from these initiatives will be used to develop similar initiatives in other areas of Scotland. Likewise, we are forging stronger links with community-based organisations as a means to supporting offenders as they leave prison.

**Working with Partner Organisations**

During the current financial year, we have worked collaboratively and successfully with a range of organisations and will continue to do so in 2014-15 and beyond. The key learning point for SPS, drawn from the broad range of recommendations in Audit Scotland’s report *Reducing Re-offending in Scotland* (November 2012), was the need to be able to demonstrate how SPS engages more broadly with partnership working so as to support and enable delivery of effectively assessed, appropriate and proportionate services for those passing through the justice system.
An example of effective partnership working is the opening of the Family Centre and Help Hub at HMP and YOI Cornton Vale. The Help Hub was developed in partnership with Stirling Inter-Faith Community Justice Group, and Fife and Forth Valley Community Justice Group. The centre is operated by a coalition of the Inter-Faith Group, SPS and a number of volunteers from the community. The fundamental underpinnings of the service approach is to recognise the needs of families affected by imprisonment, and the requirement to support them when visiting their loved ones in custody. My vision is to have a Help Hub in every prison across Scotland and in 2014-15, SPS will work with community partners in the North East to deliver a Help Hub for HMP Grampian.

**Young People**

Another priority workstream for SPS is the on-going work at HMYOI Polmont aimed at improving the life chances of young people through changes to the way that young people are engaged and supported. These changes include the collaborative work with Education Scotland and the wider statutory and voluntary sectors, where progress is already being made to create a skills development and learning environment. Changing what we do at Polmont and how we engage with the young men there means investment in staff training and development, and widening the range of opportunities for them to gain relevant skills, including parenting. Parenting skills are hugely important; research in 2010 suggested that almost one in three young men in Polmont were fathers or expectant fathers.

Research indicates that having a job helps to reduce re-offending, therefore SPS has decided to use some of its resources to develop employment and training opportunities for young people, both whilst in custody and on release. Work is underway to establish a number of placements for young people at SPS Central Stores and SPS College. This will build further on the successful provision of work placements within SPS Headquarters' staff catering facility which re-opened in August 2013. Four young people from HMYOI Polmont attend the facility daily to prepare and serve breakfast and lunch meals to staff and visitors in Calton House. This provides invaluable work experience, coupled with sector specific qualifications to these young people who are all due to be released throughout next year. Prior to this, work will be undertaken by SPS, in conjunction with relevant partners, to support them in their search for employment or training in the community. It is intended that this model will be replicated in the range of placements being developed by SPS over the coming months.

**Short Term Offenders**

In addition to the Greenock pilot, a new Public Social Partnership initiative at HMP Low Moss became operational on 8 May 2013. This initiative has prison officers working alongside third sector colleagues providing direct support to those leaving prison, which evidence shows helps to prevent re-lapse and is more likely to lead to reduced levels of re-offending.

This new model for delivering throughcare builds on examples of good practice that we know have previously worked well, albeit often in isolated projects and in un-
coordinated ways. The provision of focused pre and post-release services will have a positive impact on reducing the likelihood of prisoners re-offending. It is widely recognised that those leaving custody are confronted with a range of social, economic and personal challenges that create barriers to a crime-free lifestyle. This new service will help people to overcome those obstacles and better enable their return to mainstream society, and active and positive citizen participation.

**The Prison Estate**

As well as investing in people, SPS will continue to invest in the upkeep of the fabric of the estate. As I advised last year, we commenced work to improve the current facilities at HMP and YOI Cornton Vale. Three of the houseblocks have now been upgraded and improvement work continues at pace throughout the prison.

Preliminary work will be taken forward to plan the replacement of HMPs Barlinnie and Inverness, however, the substantive work to replace these prisons falls outwith the current spending review. As mentioned earlier in this briefing, resources will be allocated to the general upkeep of the existing estate. For example, in relation to HMP Barlinnie, we will continue to invest modest sums to improve the current fabric of the buildings where this is desirable, practicable and affordable, including improvement to the 'safe cells' in one of the halls following a recommendation from the Chief Inspector of Prisons.

**Women Offenders**

Work started this financial year to design and develop the new HMP Inverclyde as a "custom-made" national prison for women offenders in keeping with the recommendations of the Women's Commission.

The concept design is now nearing completion. A project team is also in place to design a new regional women's unit at HMP Edinburgh, which will primarily serve the East of Scotland.

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Chief Executive
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