



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

**Report on
HM Special Unit
Barlinnie**

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland

1993

ROLE OF THE PRISONS INSPECTORATE

Section 7 of the Prisons (Scotland) Act 1989 provides the statutory basis for the Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland. Before 1981 the post of Chief Inspector was held by a Prison Governor; but it was decided then that the appointment of an outsider would provide greater impartiality and independence of outlook. The Chief Inspector receives strong professional support from 2 senior Governors from the Scottish Prison Service who are seconded to the posts of Deputy Chief Inspector and Inspector. A Staff Officer, who is a civil servant seconded from The Scottish Office, completes the Inspectorate team.

Scotland's 21 penal establishments each receive a full formal inspection, on a cyclical basis, currently every 3½-4 years. These inspections take between a week and a fortnight depending on the size and complexity of the prison/institution. The Inspectorate examines all aspects of the establishment from the point of view of humanity, propriety and efficiency, while having proper regard to security, discipline and control. The Inspectorate also takes account of present day policies and concepts applying to the Scottish Prison Service. The Chief Inspector comments on general trends in an Annual Report to the Secretary of State which is laid before Parliament and published.

The Chief Inspector is not an Ombudsman and cannot deal with individual complaints by prisoners or staff. But groups of prisoners and groups of staff are interviewed during each formal inspection, their general views are recorded, and may form a basis for recommendations or suggestions for improvement (points of note).

Inspection reports attempt to give a balanced account of conditions in the prison/institution, as they are found. When completed, inspection reports are sent directly to the Secretary of State: they are not subject to negotiation with the Governor or the Scottish Prison Service. In due course, the Secretary of State's response is published along with the report. The Chief Inspector has no executive powers but is able to draw the Secretary of State's attention to any aspects of a penal establishment which call for comment. The publicity which the Chief Inspector's reports attract is in itself a powerful instrument for change and improvement.

Full inspection reports are followed up by one day visits in subsequent years. Short reports on other visits are sent to the Governor and to the Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service. The Inspectorate also undertakes occasional studies on a theme common to all or several penal establishments; and these, too, are normally published.

Finally the Inspectorate is responsible for inspecting legalised police cells which are used to hold prisoners awaiting trial locally in isolated areas or, following conviction, pending transfer to a main prison. These inspections are carried out every 3 years. Reports are submitted to the Secretary of State, sent to the Chief Constables concerned and summarised in the Chief Inspector's next Annual Report.

The Right Honourable Ian Lang MP
Secretary of State for Scotland

Sir

In accordance with my terms of reference as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, I forward for your information and consideration a report of an inspection carried out at HM Special Unit Barlinnie. This was the fourth inspection of the establishment since the Inspectorate, in its present form, was set up in 1981.

Four formal recommendations have been made and some matters were drawn to the notice of the Governor of the establishment and the Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service for necessary action.

I am
Your obedient servant



A H BISHOP
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
for Scotland

20 December 1983

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 An inspection of HM Special Unit, Barlinnie was carried out, in conjunction with an inspection of HMP Barlinnie, during the period 31 October - 11 November 1993. We wish to record our gratitude to the Governor for agreeing at short notice to an alteration to our previously published programme which enabled us, for operational reasons, to carry out this inspection earlier than had originally been intended. The inspection team comprised:-

A H Bishop	-	HM Chief Inspector
R Kite	-	HM Deputy Chief Inspector
L W G Hewitson	-	Inspector
B Henaghen	-	Staff Officer

1.2 This was the fourth inspection of the Unit since the Inspectorate was set up in its present form in 1981. Unlike previous occasions, however, when the Unit was the subject of stand-alone inspections, this inspection was combined with the formal inspection of HMP Barlinnie partly to reflect the existence of many shared services between the two establishments. The Unit's status as a separate establishment with its own Governor I/C has, however, been recognised by this separate report. Furthermore in other respects the inspection team operated within the usual parameters in that matters inspected and reported on include:-

- Physical conditions
- Quality of prisoner regimes
- Morale of staff and prisoners
- Questions of humanity and propriety
- General efficiency and effectiveness of the establishment

1.3 In our last report we moved away from our usual format in that we did not make Recommendations or list Points of Note but rather highlighted 13 'Points for Action or Consideration'. This latest report considers the progress which has been achieved on those points but it also comments on developments which have taken place since that last inspection which was held in September 1989.

1.4 Comments and statements of fact are pertinent to the situation as we found it at the time of the inspection. In concluding the inspection we met with the Governor to discuss our findings in some detail and subsequently we met with the Chief Executive of the SPS to raise some specific issues.

1.5 This report contains four recommendations and nine points of note which we commend for early consideration and implementation and which we shall monitor during subsequent annual one-day visits to the establishment. The report also has two Annexes. Annex 1 contains details of the Unit's Strategic Plan - see paragraph 4.9 - while Annex 2 contains a list of abbreviations used in this report.

1.6 Finally this report is prefixed by a statement briefly describing the Inspectorate's role in the conduct of inspections generally. This is the first occasion on which we have taken this step. We have done so in the hope that it may prove helpful in clarifying both the range of our powers and our method of operation. We intend to use a similar preface in all subsequent reports.

2. ESTABLISHMENT

2.1 The Barlinnie Special Unit opened in February 1973 following the recommendations of a Scottish Office Working Party which had been set up "to consider what arrangements should be made for the treatment of certain inmates likely to be detained in custody for very long periods or with propensities to violence towards staff; and to review the function of the segregation unit at Inverness". Reporting in 1971, the Working Party recommended that a special unit should be provided within the Scottish penal system. The suggestion was also made that this unit should be situated within the grounds of HMP Perth where the necessary psychiatric services could be provided.

2.2 In the event, locating the Unit in Perth proved to be impracticable and the only other accommodation which could be found was a self-contained unit in HMP Barlinnie which had been used previously to hold females detained on remand. Although that accommodation was regarded as suitable for the function of a special unit it was able to provide less accommodation than the 20 places (along with isolation and observation cells) recommended by the Working Party. The Unit, however, did develop along lines recommended by the Working Party to provide a routine and working relationships considered by many to be unique within the penal system.

2.3 The whole ethos of the Unit was that it should operate as a 'therapeutic community' - ie, a setting or environment structured to effect desired change in those who entered it. As a consequence, in those early days the majority of staff had a prison nursing background. Over the years the position has changed so that today no member of staff has nursing experience although all, with the exception of the Governor grades, are volunteers. The term 'therapeutic' has been dropped mainly due to its connotations in relation to a psychiatric hospital although there are regular inputs by a Consultant Psychiatrist and a Clinical Psychologist.

2.4 That said, however, many aspects of the concept of a community still survive. In particular, the important features of life in the Unit are firstly the philosophy that it operates on the basis of mutual trust between staff and prisoners and secondly that everyone from senior

management to prisoners is involved as an active member of the community. Most of the activities of the community are decided by meetings, the most important of which is the formal community meeting which takes place every Tuesday afternoon and at which attendance is compulsory. These meetings make decisions on aspects of life in the Unit affecting staff and/or prisoners - eg the community might decide to bar a visitor or a group from coming to the Unit. Another use of the community meetings has been the imposition of punishments on prisoners who break the community's rules - there being no formalised disciplinary procedures (eg an Orderly Room) for all but the most serious offences against Prison Rules.

2.5 In addition any member may call a special meeting at any time for any purpose. As with the weekly meeting, attendance at these crisis meetings is compulsory. The final type of meeting - although we understand that these are rarely, if ever, held now - is the 'four-group' comprising two members of staff and two prisoners either to familiarise new members of the community with the philosophy and working of the Unit or to enable individuals to deal with particular difficulties on the occasions when a more informal approach seems appropriate.

2.6 Over the years the Unit has been the subject of much media interest. In 1979, following the report of an Inquiry set up by the then Secretary of State for Scotland, instructions were issued concerning the operation of the Unit which defined the procedures governing its day-to-day management but which left unchanged the basic concepts established in its early years. In 1982 the report on our first inspection of the Unit contained a suggestion that "all financial and property transactions of each inmate be recorded" and in response the Secretary of State indicated that that would be considered as part of a general revision which was being undertaken of the 1979 instructions. However, in 1986 - and again in 1990 - we had to record that the revision had not taken place and in the 1990 report we expressed the view that such a revision was necessary given the length of time that had elapsed since the Operational Instructions had been issued. We have to report yet again that no updated version of those Instructions has been produced and, given the changes which have taken place in the SPS since

they were first introduced in 1979, we recommend that this revision be undertaken as a matter of priority.

2.7 Since the Unit opened there have been a total of 35 prisoners located there, including the current eight incumbents. Of that total, 24 have been life sentence prisoners with the remaining 11 serving determinate sentences. Of the 27 who have moved out of the Unit, two were liberated, one died in the Unit, two requested a return to mainstream conditions, 11 transferred to other establishments as part of planned moves, 10 were downgraded and returned to mainstream and one was transferred to HM State Hospital, Carstairs.

2.8 Although physically located within the perimeter of HMP Barlinnie, the Unit remains a separate establishment with its own staff and management structure including a Governor I/C. Access to the Unit is via a locked gate and it has its own perimeter wall which separates it from the main prison. The restricted space and limited facilities - which have been commented on in previous reports - continue to be a problem but in reality, short of an entirely new building or a move to another location, there is very limited scope for expansion of the existing premises.

2.9 Since our last inspection the entire Unit had been refurbished. That work had certainly improved the internal appearance of the building but the overall impression gained on approaching the Unit was of a rather drab, run-down and claustrophobic area in need of some re-generation.

3. DISCIPLINE, SECURITY AND CONTROL

3.1 One of the main objectives of the Unit was to develop self discipline and so effect change on the part of prisoners who could not, or would not, develop in mainstream conditions. Judged by that criterion the Unit has been successful. Over the years there have been very few disagreements either between staff and prisoners or among prisoners which failed to be resolved by the community itself - usually via the weekly community meeting. That there had been very few major incidents since the Unit opened would also have to be regarded as a success given the nature of the prisoners located there and, in many cases, the propensity to violence which many of them displayed before arrival. Because the community dealt with incidences of indiscipline, there was rarely any need for an Orderly Room although the Governor retained the statutory authority to deal with cases in that way if deemed necessary. In the most severe cases - eg a serious assault - prisoners could be located in the Barlinnie Segregation Unit pending a final decision on what action should be taken.

3.2 We were satisfied with the perimeter security which was the responsibility of the main prison. However, we were concerned that there were some deficiencies within the Unit. In particular, cell security checks were not being carried out in accordance with the Unit's Operational Instructions and we suggest that the Governor address this as a matter of urgency. In addition, there was a lack of proper searching procedures for visitors to the Unit and prisoners' incoming mail was being handed out unopened - these issues are discussed in more detail in paragraphs 6.4 and 6.7-8.

3.3 We inspected the contingency plans - covering issues specifically affecting the Unit. We were satisfied that they had been prepared to a satisfactory standard. We noted also that they had been incorporated into the contingency plans for HMP Barlinnie and that the Unit management also had copies of the contingency plans for that establishment.

4. STAFF AND MANAGEMENT

Complement

4.1 Staff in post at the time of the inspection were as follows:-

Governor I/C	Grade III	1
Deputy Governor	Grade V	1
Discipline Staff	PO	2
	SO	3
	Officer	11

At the time of the inspection the Unit was under its complement by one Officer but a recent Staff Inspection report had recommended that the complement of uniformed staff should change to give the Unit three PO's, one SO and 13 Officers.

4.2 The system of selecting Discipline Staff to work in the Unit has remained unchanged over the years. The Unit is very much in control of the timing of staff moves and when vacancies are anticipated posts are advertised throughout the service, with staff being invited to apply for transfer either in their existing grade or on promotion. Although the policy relating to small units in the SPS seems to have developed along somewhat different lines from those first envisaged, staff who apply to work in the Barlinnie Unit will have had the opportunity to gain some knowledge of what to expect through the literature on Units circulating round the service. Before a final decision is reached on suitability, potential staff are invited to spend a period of one week's detached duty in the Unit, which procedure offers a two-fold advantage: firstly, it gives the individual members of staff the opportunity to experience at first-hand a regime which is likely to be untypical of anything they have previously come across and so help them to decide whether they would wish to work in the Unit's very different environment; and secondly it gives management the opportunity to assess at first hand the suitability of the officers concerned before a final decision is taken. Given the specialised nature of the duties involved in the Unit, this is a system to which we give our full support. Staff selected to work in the Unit can normally expect to remain there for not less than two and not more than four years.

4.3 In addition to the Governor and uniformed grades, the Unit also has inputs on a regular basis from a Psychologist and a Psychiatrist - see paragraphs 7.1-6. A number of other services are provided on a shared basis with HMP Barlinnie and these are discussed in later parts of this report.

Management

4.4 The management of any small unit will inevitably be different from that of a traditional establishment. At the time of our inspection the Governor had been in post for 2½ years and his Deputy for four years. In our opinion, it is desirable, though not essential, that both members of the Governor grade should have a wide knowledge of the SPS, preferably with experience of working with LTP's.

4.5 As in the rest of SPS, staff communications are of prime importance and in general terms they appeared to be satisfactory, with a formal arrangement of team briefing, GOB's and handover meetings backed up by the Governor and his Deputy doing the rounds. In addition, a copy of the Barlinnie Weekly Bulletin was available to staff.

4.6 On the whole relationships among staff were satisfactory, as was staff's relationship with visiting specialists, although the view was expressed that visiting professionals tended at times to hide behind their professional banner. It was suggested also that on occasions the Governor was inclined to be remote but we were satisfied that he was regularly seen in and around the Unit and was available to both staff and prisoners. At our suggestion, however, the Governor agreed that senior management would undertake occasional evening visits.

4.7 As recorded earlier in this report, there had recently been considerable improvements in the physical conditions within the Unit - improvements which had been much appreciated not only by staff and prisoners but also by regular visitors. The Governor has to be congratulated for his drive in pushing those projects ahead, as do the

prisoners and staff who had to tolerate very difficult conditions while the work was being carried out.

4.8 During our discussions, both the Governor and the Deputy Governor expressed concern about the lack of prisoner movement out of the Unit, the last transfer of a prisoner under normal circumstances being in 1990. This is discussed in more detail in paragraphs 4.12, 6.16, 9.2, 10.3 and 10.5.

Strategic Planning

4.9 As part of our inspection we examined the situation as regards the Unit's Strategic Plan. Annex 1 to this report comprises a note by the establishment which gives the state of play on the strategic objectives in that plan, indicating progress achieved in 1992-93 and the ongoing position.

Staff Group

4.10 As is customary during an inspection we spoke formally to a group of staff and with other members informally. As is our normal practice, we have recorded the views of the staff as they were put to us but that should not be taken to imply that the Inspectorate are in full agreement with every point raised. In our opinion, however, it is important that staff's views should be recorded so that management can be made aware of staff perceptions including those concerning the operation of management. Where issues raised related to aspects of the prison we have indicated the relevant paragraph numbers which deal specifically with the point discussed. The main observations made in those discussions are summarised as follows.

4.11 Relationships with prisoners - these were described as good although staff felt that the prisoners fell into two distinct groups. The view was also expressed that the extended visits which prisoners enjoyed with their families and friends resulted in a reduction in the amount of personal contact with staff which in turn could affect overall relationships. Staff confirmed our impression that no real efforts were being made to challenge prisoners' behaviour - see paragraphs 6.4 and 6.6.

4.12 The onward movement to mainstream prisons of prisoners from the Unit and staff's concern about the lack of movement out of the Unit, a point on which we commented in our last report, was still present, It was suggested to us that the situation had reached stagnation point due to the fact that all the current prisoners were serving life sentences. We were told also that - adding to the confusion - prisoners appeared to be receiving conflicting messages about the possibility of their being given a personal programme prior to leaving the Unit - see paragraphs 4.8, 6.16, 9.2, 10.3 and 10.5.

4.13 Staff facilities - these were described as being very poor - see paragraphs 4.21-22.

4.14 Relationships with management - officers felt that there was a good relationship with SO's, PO's and the Deputy Governor but there was a feeling that the Governor tended to be somewhat remote - see paragraph 4.6.

4.15 Staff Training - generally speaking, staff were content with the arrangements for their training. In addition to their own Unit programme they also had access to courses held in HMP Barlinnie - see paragraphs 4.19-20.

4.16 Links with HMP Barlinnie - there was general agreement that these had improved in recent times and, as examples, we were advised that the Unit now had representatives on Barlinnie's Race Relations and Health and Safety Committees - see paragraphs 8.8 and 9.9.

4.17 Relationships with professionals - the general feeling among staff was that the professionals who visited the Unit in an official capacity, including Barlinnie's nursing staff, tended to hide behind the mask of confidentiality even where, in the interests of the better running of the community, more information might reasonably be released to Unit staff - see paragraph 4.6.

4.18 Community meetings - it was confirmed that these were still held on a weekly basis but that they were normally now very brief affairs - see paragraph 10.4.

Staff Training

4.19 In our last report on the Unit we commented on the fact that staff had no major or formalised training programme. We are pleased to report that considerable progress has been made. The Unit now had its own training budget and staff were free to attend courses run by HMP Barlinnie, for which purpose they were provided with copies of the prospectus issued quarterly by the STO there. We noted also that the Unit was represented on the Barlinnie Staff Training Committee, which not only ensured that the Unit was made aware of developments in the field of training but also afforded the opportunity for the staff to contribute to any policy decisions and to ensure as far as possible that their specialised needs were being taken into account. That representation is something to which we give our full support and is an arrangement which we trust will continue.

4.20 Staff in the Unit also benefited from the fact that specialised training events - which all staff attended - were held on a regular basis. In addition, because of the small numbers in the Unit, staff at PO or SO level not infrequently attended SPS College courses on behalf of members of the Governor grades and then made presentations to other members of staff on the relevant subjects. The net effect was that staff in the Unit had on average among the highest number of training hours per officer that we have anywhere encountered. It was also pleasing to note that management were not prepared to rest on their laurels but were making efforts further to improve the training situation, as evidenced by the fact that the Strategic Plan contained an objective "to continue to review the content and format of all Unit staff training to ensure its relevance to the work of the Special Unit and the Service generally". We applaud the efforts which have been made to increase the training opportunities for staff and we support management in their efforts to introduce further improvements.

Staff Facilities

4.21 Staff facilities were very inadequate. There was a small locker/muster room and two offices, all of which were also accessible to prisoners. Toilets, which were used also by prisoners and visitors,

were limited and there was no specific staff shower facility, with staff having to use the shower adjacent to the prisoners' weights/fitness room. Staff had access to the limited facilities available in Barlinnie and although those were far from ideal they at least provided an opportunity to be away from base for a short period. We understand that staff did on occasion use the community sitting room but that was a far from ideal arrangement as it could not be regarded as their own space - which is important in a close, intense working environment.

4.22 In our view the Unit suffers badly from a lack of proper staff facilities, not only in relation to office space to enable them to undertake confidential work-related tasks but also with regard to basic toilet/shower facilities, a problem which could be exacerbated should the number of female officers on the complement increase. We accept that the limited space occupied by the Unit makes expansion of the staff facilities difficult but nevertheless we believe that management should review the current provision and take whatever steps are possible to maximise the space available.

SPOA

4.23 We met with four members, including the Secretary, of the Local Branch of the SPOA which had the dual responsibility of representing staff from both the main prison and the Unit.

4.24 We were advised that, as far as the Unit was concerned, it was very rare for any of the Association's members to approach the Branch representatives with a problem, doubtless because staff in the Unit agreed aspects of routine and procedures direct with the Governor I/C. The only real area of concern to the Local Branch was over the lengthy period that staff might be called on to remain in the Unit.

5. POPULATION AND ACCOMMODATION

Population

5.1 The Unit is designed to hold nine prisoners in single cell accommodation and at the time of our inspection the population was eight male prisoners, that being regarded by management as the ideal number. Of these prisoners, five were Security Category 'B', the other three being Category 'C'. All of the prisoners were serving life sentences.

5.2 The selection of prisoners for the Unit is now according to a well-established practice. In the first instance candidates are nominated by the Governor of the holding establishment and the case is then considered by the Advisory Committee on Prisoner Management. Once approved by that Committee the nominee is interviewed by representatives of the Unit who then make a recommendation to SPS HQ although the final decision is taken at Ministerial level. In our last report on the Unit we commented on that selection process and offered the view that as little time as possible should elapse between the original nomination and the decision in each case. We believe that that argument is still valid because - as we said in our last report - undue delay can cause anxiety in the case of prospective admissions. In reality, however, the system has not been put into practice in recent times because of the lack of movement in or out of the Unit.

Accommodation

5.3 Accommodation within the Unit was spread over two storeys and comprised nine single cells. Eight of those cells were being used as prisoner accommodation; the ninth cell was empty and was being used as general storage space. Within the accommodation area there was also a toilet/shower facility, a small laundry located in a converted cell and a room used by one of the prisoners as a work area. Each prisoner was allowed to personalise his own cell and as part of our inspection we visited every cell. The personalisation of each cell went much further than is found anywhere in mainstream prisoner accommodation and, but for the lockable doors, it would have been easy to forget that this was a penal establishment. That said, however, cell personalisation was also

part of the ethos of the Unit and was regarded by both management and prisoners as being an important part of the re-socialising process. For that reason alone we do not wish to make any suggestions for change.

5.4 At the time of our last inspection the accommodation area was badly in need of redecoration. We were pleased, therefore, to see on our latest visit that that work had been carried out and that vast improvements were in evidence.

5.5 The remainder of the accommodation comprised a general purpose/recreation room, a kitchen area, a small room containing some PE equipment and a shower room attached, two staff offices, a community sitting room, a staff rest/locker room and male and female toilets. In reality, all of the rooms were used equally by staff, prisoners and visitors to the Unit with no real restrictions in place.

5.6 An exercise yard was available, although rarely used, for outdoor recreation and some space had been made available for gardening (including a greenhouse), general craftwork and a pigeon loft.

6. REGIMES

6.1 It should be made clear at the outset that, in the normally accepted sense of the word, a regime does not exist in any structured or formal system for prisoners in the Unit. Prisoners are more or less free to occupy their time as they please - an arrangement which over the years since the Unit opened has been regarded as being the best way forward for the types of prisoner located there. In the report of our 1986 inspection we recorded that from inception it had been decided that there would be no structured programme of work and that prisoners would instead be encouraged to develop their individual interests whether these lay in arts, literature, education, handicrafts or physical education. The result was that freedom of expression allied to virtually unrestricted visits and contacts with outside agencies (see paragraph 6.4 and 6.6-7), although in line with the basic concepts of the SPS policy document "Opportunity and Responsibility", allowed prisoners in the Unit to enjoy a better - or certainly a more relaxed - quality of life than could be obtained in a mainstream prison.

6.2 In some respects there were similarities to a 'normal' regime in that prisoners had access (albeit virtually unrestricted) to a card-telephone and for those with a security category 'C' Classification there were escorted shopping trips and visits to a local swimming pool. Within the Unit a small room had been set aside to enable the prisoners to participate in weight/fitness training whilst in the main recreation area a running machine had been installed. The gymnasium in Barlinnie had been set aside exclusively for the use of Unit prisoners daily Monday to Friday between 1100 hours and 1215 hours and although the uptake was not high both Unit and PE staff considered the provision of such an opportunity to be valuable and worthwhile for prisoners and management. Medical (including dental) services were provided on request from HMP Barlinnie but, given the general good health of the Unit's prisoners and the very small numbers involved, such requests were rare.

6.3 In other respects, however, the regime differed greatly from that available to prisoners in other establishments. Prisoners wore their own clothing at all times and were responsible for their own laundering through the provision of a washing machine and tumble drier. There was no employment as such and prisoners were therefore left to fill in

their time in whatever manner they chose, which resulted mainly in the pursuit of personal interests. Although there was no formal work arrangement prisoners did receive a weekly wage of £8.01 which could be supplemented by cash handed in from family, friends, etc. We noted, however, that the SPS rule which restricts prisoners in mainstream conditions to £2.50 per week from their PPC did not apply in the Unit where prisoners had unrestricted access to cash handed in - see also paragraph 2.6. Other than parcels - which were opened by staff in front of the prisoners concerned - personal mail was handed over to prisoners without staff checking the contents which is contrary to SPS Standing Orders. Because there was no structure to the regime there were no formal exercise or recreation periods and apart from lock-up periods prisoners were free to participate in such activities as and when they wished.

6.4 The most significant difference, however, between the regime in the Unit and in mainstream prisons related to the visit arrangements. These were unequalled anywhere in the SPS in that visitors might visit at any time when staff were on duty and the prison had been opened up and, except for reasons of staff availability, there were no restrictions on the length of such visits. In addition to normal visits by families and friends, the Unit also received visits from interested groups or individuals from many parts of the world - although such visits would normally have been agreed at a community meeting. Personal visitors to prisoners often took place in the prisoners' cells - a privilege jealously guarded both by the prisoners and their visitors - and, on the grounds that the vast majority of visitors were regular and therefore well known to staff there was only a cursory search of bags and parcels brought in. Such searches were conducted in the Unit and not at the Barlinnie main gate through which all Unit visitors had to pass. Finally, we noted that there was virtually no staff supervision during the course of in-cell visits.

Comment

6.5 As we have stated above, there is a distinct lack of structure attached to the regime of the Unit. We acknowledge that the concept of an unstructured regime was one of the basic principles on which the Unit has operated since it first opened. We see logic and merit in the

operation of such a system and we agree with the basic concept. However, we have to ask whether that liberalism has now been taken too far. From our observations it was clear that prisoners were left very much to do whatever they pleased and that their activities ranged from keeping themselves busy on individual pursuits to hanging around the Unit doing little more than passing the time. In our opinion what is now needed is a more vigorous injection of physical and mental stimuli, eg education, work, the arts, tackling offending behaviour (individually or in groups) or undertaking charity projects.

6.6 One of the most liberal aspects of life in the Unit is the open visiting system whereby visitors are more or less free to come and go as they like subject only to the lock-up periods. We support the reasons for visiting arrangements which are more liberal than in mainstream prisons and we do not wish to suggest any change to the basic concept. We believe, however, that all-day visits can work against the ideals of a community. Firstly, they reduce scope for interaction not only among the prisoners as a group but also between staff and prisoners. Secondly, it must be difficult for prisoners who receive very few visits to countenance others with more regular and much longer visits. For those reasons we suggest that, although the concept of a liberal visits system should remain, there should be set periods each day when visits are not allowed. These periods need not be extremely lengthy but they should provide sufficient time - on a compulsory basis if need be - for some community focused activities involving all staff and prisoners. We believe that that would go some way towards restoring the community spirit - which we perceive to have diminished in recent times - and should give prisoners the opportunity to examine more closely their life in the Unit and what the future can and should hold for them.

6.7 We would suggest also that there are two control aspects related to visits which need to be re-examined. The ethos of the Unit is that it is based on trust between staff and prisoners and as part of that trust, visits are allowed to take place unsupervised in the prisoners' cells. Again, we do not wish to suggest any change to that arrangement. The current Operational Instructions state, however that staff should be present in the cells area when visits are taking place, in addition to

which there is a local rule to the effect that cell doors should not be closed during visits. It was clear to us that neither instruction was being regularly observed and we suggest, therefore, that both points should be re-affirmed. The second point relates to the searching of visitors which we noted was being carried out only in a cursory manner. Although we acknowledge the reliance on trust which operates in the Unit, we suggest that a more thorough but dignified system of searching parcels, bags, etc brought in by visitors should be introduced.

6.8 Our final point relates to incoming mail, which, as stated at paragraph 6.3 above, with the exception of parcels is handed unopened to the prisoners. In our opinion this is unsatisfactory and we suggest that all incoming personal mail should be opened in the presence of the relevant prisoner in accordance with Standing Orders.

Prisoner Groups

6.9 Of the eight prisoners resident in the Unit, only three (two of whom were accompanied by their visitors) availed themselves of the formal invitation - in the form of two separate meetings - to speak to members of the Inspectorate: we did, however, meet with almost all of the prisoners in one way or another during our inspection of every aspect of the Unit.

6.10 The prisoners' dominating concern was over the future of the Unit, with rumours that a recently completed report was recommending its imminent closure being rife. The prisoners nevertheless and understandably impressed on us their arguments for the Unit's continuation. In support they extolled what they saw as the useful positive and negative aspects of its role. Negatively they considered that by enabling the removal of difficult prisoners (like themselves) from the mainstream of the Scottish prison system, a serious obstruction to the proper functioning of that system was eliminated. Still more negatively but potentially even more importantly, by minimising the risk of major mainstream disruption, the Unit represented value for money: if its existence prevented one major disturbance in a decade it would have paid for its keep. Less dramatically, reduction in the extent of lock-downs in the mainstream would contribute to a lessening of tension and problems of control in the SPS.

6.11 Looking to the Unit's positive role, the argument mounted by the prisoners concentrated on the therapeutic effect of the different relationship with staff and with each other which they had all encountered and - in their different ways - had had to learn to cope with on entering the Unit. The disappearance of the 'them and us' syndrome and its replacement by relationships built on trust and respect had proved difficult for some of them to absorb initially; indeed each incomer took some time to appreciate that no one was going to order him around and that he had to make his own decision about what sort of regime he intended to pursue. They had no doubt, however, that that process did lead to a modification of attitudes. This is a trend which we welcome and accepting it to be the case, it is one which we believe would help prisoners come to terms more easily with a return to mainstream conditions and eventual release.

6.12 On the question of the regime, the prisoners unanimously favoured the present unstructured arrangement. They attached great importance to being allowed to do their own thing and were appreciative of the support without coercion which they received both from their peer group, especially through the weekly community meeting, and from uniformed and non uniformed staff alike, including all those who helped in one way or another with the Unit's regime. Perhaps not surprisingly none of the prisoners showed any enthusiasm for moving elsewhere in the system.

6.13 Some concern was expressed about the possibility of the Unit's being market tested which, we were told, was causing uncertainty in the minds of the prisoners. Another concern which was affecting morale was that the prisoners felt that they were making great strides individually in coming to terms with themselves but that that progress was not being recognised as was evidenced by refusal to grant any prisoner a release programme prior to transfer out of the Unit. Consequently, the prisoners expressed themselves as content to remain where they were in the absence of any target to aim for.

6.14 There was agreement that one of the most treasured aspects of life in the Unit was the visit arrangements which, we were told, allowed individual prisoners to re-build relationships with their families. Referring to the community system, the prisoners, while admitting that

the community was not as close as it once had been, considered that it helped them to develop social skills in dealing with each other which would be of benefit in coping with life on release.

Comment

6.15 Because of the nature of the regime, none of the usual questions raised by or with prisoners during an inspection - quality and presentation of food, activity hours, recreation etc - were discussed. Although as indicated above the prisoners made clear their adjustment difficulties on first entering the Unit, they implied that even greater difficulties would arise were they to be transferred to the mainstream, even its upper end. They mostly thought that their processing in the Unit had led to a satisfactory modification of their attitudes but were less clear whether that meant simply a greater acceptance of the reality of prison life (in the unusual circumstances of the Unit's regime) or represented a real (and enduring) reformation in their attitude to society as a whole.

6.16 In fact, prisoners saw no incentives in returning to mainstream conditions and the fact that they had been removed in the first instance might mean that any enforced return would lead to a repetition of their original problem. It would be sad if that were to happen because it would indicate that the Unit had failed with the individuals concerned. On the other hand, it was indicated to us - see paragraph 6.11 - that a spell in the Unit did lead to a modification of attitudes and we take that as a positive and encouraging sign. We believe that prisoners in the Unit - and certainly those who were there when we carried out our inspection - need to be given a clear message about the future. It was with some dismay that we learned that they had been receiving mixed messages about their future prospects and, not surprisingly perhaps, that they were clinging to a statement apparently made to the effect that it should be possible to obtain a release programme prior to leaving the Unit. We have been advised, however, that Departmental policy on this is quite clear namely that, as is the norm with prisoners in mainstream conditions, life-sentenced prisoners in the Unit will not be considered for a programme until such time as they attain full or limited Category 'D' status and are able to have some unescorted freedom in the community.

That is not going to be achieved while the prisoners remain in the Unit and the sooner this message gets across the better. We consider, however, that it would be wrong to move prisoners out of the Unit after spending a long time there - the lengths of time in the Unit of the current population ranged from three to nine years - and to transfer them into, for example, the bottom Hall of a progression system in a long-term prison. We also support the view that, at least immediately after leaving the Unit, prisoners should not be located in a dormitory where they might be subjected to pressure by virtue of being an ex-special case.

7. REGIMES - PROVISION OF SPECIALIST SERVICES

Psychiatrist

7.1 A Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist, based at the Douglas Inch Centre, Glasgow, provided two half-day sessions per week at the Unit, including attendance at the weekly community meeting. Cases normally arose on the basis of self referrals and usually took the form of general counselling of prisoners although there was the occasional involvement with the prisoners' families. Her responsibilities also extended to Parole Board reports but these were infrequent.

7.2 Although she suggested that the lack of structure in the Unit's regime made it difficult for prisoners to cope with working out their routine, she nevertheless thought that the present set up was probably correct. For example, she regarded the arrangements for visiting as an important part of the system.

7.3 Staff also sometimes had problems and she offered support to them on job related aspects. As to general staff training, she shared that with the Psychologist.

Psychologist

7.4 A Clinical Psychologist, also based at the Douglas Inch Centre, was contracted to provide two sessions per week. One session normally took place in the Unit where it was his practice to speak to prisoners usually according to his own programme of interviews but sometimes on the basis of self referrals. The second session was often spent elsewhere, for example in compiling reports (including parole and Category 'C' reports and contributions to the four-monthly review of each prisoner), attending seminars on behalf of the SPS or in staff training. That last aspect was of great importance in that each member of staff received four days training per year, at least one day of which would consist of a group session conducted by the Psychologist.

7.5 The Psychologist had no deputy but he did not think that the size of the Unit and the working relationships would justify such an appointment. He maintained close informal contacts with the Psychiatrist

and, because of his experience of working in the Unit, he was also sometimes involved as an intermediary between staff and prisoners.

7.6 More generally, he thought that there should be a place in the SPS for a Unit of this type although he appreciated that as an SPS resource the Unit was presently being under-utilised. He considered that the lack of movement was discouraging the Advisory Committee on Prisoner Management from referrals, with the Parole Board not in a position to act without the existence of firm programmes.

Social Work

7.7 The provision of social work was the responsibility of the Barlinnie Social Work Department but because of staff changes in that Department there was, at the time of our inspection, no formal input into the Unit and no member of the Social Work Team had been given responsibility for the provision of a service. We were, however, advised that a newly-appointed Senior Social Worker would be given the task of ensuring a more formal arrangement for a social work presence.

7.8 Historically the service had been demand led although in the past a social worker had normally attended the weekly community meetings not only to provide a wider dimension to those meetings but also to offer an advisory/counselling service. We understood that once a social work service was back in place it would be the intention to re-introduce that practice, for the foreseeable future at least, although the service provision was likely to be the subject of discussion between the Unit and Social Work managements. This is an initiative which we welcome and is something which we shall watch with interest on future visits to the Unit.

Chaplains

7.9 There is no formal Chaplaincy team attached to the Unit but we met with an RC priest who had been a regular visitor to the Unit for 11 years and was well known to both staff and prisoners. Although he visited in

a chaplaincy capacity, his religious advice was not widely sought and there were no religious services conducted for any denomination. The priest had monthly meetings, however, with the other chaplains in the Barlinnie Chaplaincy Team - with whom he shared an office - and thereby could arrange for a chaplain from another denomination to visit the Unit should that be required. He described his relationships with the other chaplains, the Governor of the Unit and the prisoners as good. In his opinion staff and prisoners got on well together and were honest with each other.

7.10 In the Unit he did not normally take on a religious role but rather was very much involved as an independent advisor and friend. As far as the Unit was concerned, he regarded it as a remarkable place which brought about positive changes in prisoners and helped them to re-socialise, communicate better and in general become better prepared to deal with the problems of a mainstream prison. He had, however, noticed major changes in the Unit during his term of office. In particular he expressed the view that there was now a much lower level of activity and that the prisoners were more self regarding than community orientated.

7.11 Looking towards the future he felt that there was a real need to stimulate discussion on the role of the Unit and for it to return to its original community spirit.

Specialist Visitors

7.12 Although the Education Unit in HMP Barlinnie would offer support if requested, in practice such requests as were made by Unit prisoners were met either directly or through the provision of specialist services.

7.13 In particular, art work was covered by a self-employed artist who, operating from a base at the Adelphi Centre Gorbals Art Project, had since 1989 provided one session per week (normally on a Friday afternoon). His approach was based as much on leadership as on instruction, with emphasis on the process of making something. In his opinion deciding on the steps to be taken required from the prisoners an effort comparable to that of original conception. His approach was to support and encourage and was geared to each prisoner individually in

the appropriate art form. At various times up to five of the current prisoners had been participating in projects and some work had been entered in a recent SPS Art exhibition - "From The Inside" - which was held in Dundee. He expressed the hope that his work had therapeutic value for the prisoners or at the very least helped to foster talents which they might not have known they possessed. Participation in the work of the Unit meant sometimes attending the Tuesday community meeting eg in relation to discussing a Christmas project. He referred to good relationships with the Governor whom he approached direct.

7.14 Also involved with the Unit was a freelance craftsman who had been connected with projects there over the previous 15 years. He referred particularly to the "Hobbit" project which the Unit had fostered for Glasgow's Year of Culture in 1990 and which had subsequently gone on tour to various libraries and education centres. The significance of that exhibition had been the degree of communication achieved: many people had visited the Unit and others had got to know of its existence and of what it was trying to do. He also referred to the seminar and exhibition which had been organised in connection with the 20th Anniversary of the Unit and to the party for the children of prisoners and their friends. Broadening out from that had been the Unit's involvement with the community. In particular contributions were being offered by the Unit to a Christmas Toy Service being arranged through the auspices of a local Episcopal Church.

8. ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER SERVICES

Records and Journals

8.1 The Unit's records and journals were examined by the Inspectorate and with one minor exception - which was brought to the attention of the Governor who undertook to rectify the omission - all were found to be in satisfactory condition.

Catering

8.2 Following the removal of a domestic washing machine and tumble drier from the kitchen, the area had been refurbished and redecorated and we were pleased to note that, at the time of our visit, hygiene issues were receiving attention and that the kitchen area was clean. We noted also that the issues which had been raised in a recent SPS Health and Safety Advisor's report had been actioned.

8.3 As regards feeding arrangements, prisoners continued to receive their dry rations from the Reallianic kitchen and they then prepared their own meals. In addition, they were able to supplement their diets either through private purchases or by meals brought in by visitors.

8.4 As stated in our last report, the concept of a community must not overshadow the need for the members to comply with current legislation on H and S, food-hygiene, etc. We urge management, therefore, to ensure that food hygiene matters are kept constantly in the forefront so that acceptable standards are maintained at all times and constant vigilance should be maintained to ensure that bad practices are not allowed to recur.

Maintenance

8.5 Having only recently been completely refurbished, the general condition of the Unit was very good and we were not aware of any major maintenance problems. However, in line with one of the stated continuing strategic objectives (see Annex 1), we recommend that the Unit should be provided with its own budget for maintenance and minor works.

Race Relations and Equal Opportunities

8.6 The posts of EMLO and EOO had been combined and were the responsibility of the Deputy Governor who had established a 'focus group' comprising two officers in the Unit to ensure that not only did they receive all the relevant notices and information but that the Unit would also be represented at the appropriate meetings in HMP Barlinnie. The Deputy Governor had attended various seminars on these topics and had passed the relevant information on to the members of the focus group.

8.7 The Unit had recently appointed its first female officer and it was hoped that that initiative would lead to further such appointments. There was a separate toilet for females (staff and visitors) but the shower area was regarded as a unisex facility. No problems had been encountered with regard to equal opportunities but any which might arise would be referred to the community to resolve. It was possible for wheelchair-bound visitors to gain access to the Unit - in fact, prior to our inspection a special event had been organised involving about 80 such individuals - although a private visit to an upstairs cell would cause some problems. However, given the layout of the accommodation that was a difficulty which had to be faced.

8.8 As regards race relations, there were no prisoners in the Unit from ethnic minority groups but the structure was in place to deal with such an eventuality. The Unit did have a SHAP calendar and contacts with relevant outside organisations had been made - for example, a representative from the Unit had attended a special ethnic meal which had been organised by HMP Barlinnie.

Early Release Liaison Officer

8.9 Although the revised parole arrangements introduced in October 1993 did not affect any of the prisoners currently in the Unit, nevertheless the Deputy Governor had been appointed as the ERLO for the establishment and as such he had attended the appropriate courses and had received the information packages. Until such time as there was a change in the prisoner population and a new arrival subject to the revised arrangements, the ERLO saw it as his role to ensure that staff, who in time would move on to other establishments, were kept abreast of policy developments in this area.

9. COMMITTEES

Visiting Committee

9.1 The VC for HMP Barlinnie also had the responsibility for the Unit and we met with two representatives, including the Chairman. We were informed that the VC met quarterly and that approximately 50% of its 34 members attended: a member of the Unit staff, usually the Governor, also attended these meetings.

9.2 The representatives admitted that the Unit was often missed in the monthly VC rota visits although we were assured that any request for an interview would normally be attended to promptly - the exception being circumstances when the request was for one specific member of the VC. The members were of the opinion that some of the prisoners had now been too long in the Unit and that there was a lack of stimulus, both physical and mental, which they felt ought to have come from the prisoners. One suggestion advanced was that some of the prisoners might change places with prisoners in the Shotts Unit, although this is not an idea to which we give general support.

9.3 The Committee applauded the efforts of the Governor over the past 2½ years concerning the changes in the layout of the Unit and in particular the new kitchen area.

Local Review Committee

9.4 Under a nationally agreed arrangement, the LRC for HMP Dungavel was responsible for considering cases for parole for any prisoner in the Unit. The Committee comprised six members, three Social Workers and three lay members, and as part of our inspection we met with three representatives. The number of cases normally considered would be not more than one or two a year and in the main it would not be the prisoners' first review. Because of the length of time prisoners tended to remain in the Unit, there might be several reviews on the same case.

9.5 Overall the members were very complimentary about the standard of parole dossiers forwarded by the Unit. The Governor, or his

representative, who attended the LRC meetings was always well briefed and able to give a personal insight into the case being discussed. Members were conscious that any case under consideration generated a great deal of discussion and interest within the Unit among both staff and prisoners and consequently such reports were always given a high level of priority by all concerned.

Energy

9.6 There was no Energy Committee for the Unit because all energy matters, including any monitoring of usage and payment of bills, were the responsibility of HMP Barlinnie. In our opinion, that was not an ideal arrangement as it meant that there was no accurate measurement of the Unit's energy costs and, consequently, a difficulty in monitoring the effects of any savings achieved. **We recommend**, therefore, that the Unit should have its own energy budgets and proper measurement and monitoring controls.

Fire

9.7 A Fire Officer had been appointed from the staff, the officer in question being a member of the main prison H and S Committee which took overall responsibility for fire matters throughout both establishments.

9.8 Although fire extinguishers were in place, we were disappointed to observe that fire doors were not always in the closed position and there was an absence of emergency exit signing. In our view, both these matters should receive immediate attention and constant monitoring. We were assured, however, that all of the points raised in the most recently prepared Fire Vulnerability Assessment Report had been attended to. As in all other establishments the need for vigilance on fire precaution matters is of vital importance and it is, therefore, incumbent on all members of the community to accept personal responsibility for good practice and to ensure compliance with the appropriate regulations.

Health and Safety

9.9 There was no separate H and S Committee for the Unit but there was representation on the corresponding body for HMP Barlinnie which, in

effect, covered both establishments. Given the size of the Unit we regard this as a satisfactory arrangement.

9.10 In March 1993 the SPS Health and Safety Adviser carried out a formal inspection of the Unit and we were assured that all of the points raised in that inspection report had been dealt with satisfactorily. During the course of our inspection we noted one item of faulty equipment in the weight/fitness room although this was subsequently removed for repair. We were assured also that all fitness equipment in the Unit was properly maintained and serviced under contract.

9.11 In our last report on the Unit we stressed the importance of ensuring that unsafe and unhygienic standards and practices were changed and improved notwithstanding the democratic nature of the regime. That message is as important now as it was in 1989 and we urge the Governor to ensure that all statutory obligations in relation to health and safety matters are adhered to even on those occasions when specific measures might not meet with the approval of the majority of the community.

Butler Trust

9.12 The Butler Trust Award Scheme was promoted by a Committee comprising the Deputy Governor - who chaired the Committee - an SO and an Officer. In recent years the Unit had featured in the Scheme and in 1988 a Bursary Award had been made to an individual who, at that time, was a regular visitor to the Unit. In 1989 a member of staff had been nominated although on that occasion no award had been made. Overall, we were satisfied that the aims of the Scheme were being promoted successfully.

10. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

10.1 As on previous inspections of the Unit, it was not possible for the Inspectorate to adopt the usual format during the inspection itself or, to some extent, in the preparation of this report. The reasons for this are perhaps obvious but are sufficiently different in kind from each other and of sufficient importance to be worth re-stating here. In the first place Barlinnie Special Unit, although under separate command and fulfilling a quite different role in the SPS, is located in the same place as - indeed is contained within the perimeter of - HMP Barlinnie. This means that a whole range of common services, including initial access for visitors and officials alike, and all environmental services including external security are sensibly and properly provided for the Unit by the much greater resources available in the main prison. For that reason (reinforced by our decision to carry out inspections of the Unit and the main prison simultaneously) we have included in this report only brief references to common services where there is no significant difference in their application between the two penal establishments.

10.2 Secondly, and still more fundamentally, the Special Unit as its name implies has occupied historically - and to some extent still occupies - a unique place in the SPS. That unique position has been a justifiable source of satisfaction for all those associated with the experiment since its inception some 20 years ago. But as other Units, especially at Shotts and Perth, have developed along similar but not identical lines, the Barlinnie Unit has increasingly run the risk, which it has not altogether avoided, of becoming slightly fossilised, a victim of its own impressive mythology and thus apparently unable to move forward in ways which might seem appropriate to the 1990s because it is still embalmed in the successful developments which it pioneered in the 1970s.

10.3 It may be that a question needs to be asked about the purpose of the Unit. Is it intended, as was suggested to us, to act as a filter for the prison service to remove temporarily those who are causing trouble in the same way as the Courts act as a filter for society generally? If that is its purpose then, for a limited number of prisoners over the years, it would have to be regarded as a success because, despite the fact that it frequently accommodates those with violent tendencies, it has been relatively incident free since it opened and for

those who do return to the mainstream their level of violence also drops. From that point of view, therefore, the Unit has been good for a number of prisoners. It could be expected to do a similar job for others but only if they were given the opportunity of a place there, which would indicate that there is a strong case for a regular turnover of prisoners, say about two per annum. Otherwise complacency sets in, prisoners adapt to a more relaxed lifestyle with no efforts made at group or self-analysis - which was one of the ideas behind the Unit's creation - and the criticism that a place in the Unit is a reward for bad behaviour gains strength.

10.4 In some respects the charge levelled at the Unit in the preceding paragraphs might be regarded as unjustified. For example we were pleased to note the extent of the refurbishment of the Unit. This was somewhat overdue and had been accompanied by a welcome tidying up of the condition of and arrangements in the kitchen and the general standards of cleanliness and hygiene in the Unit. For that, credit should go in almost equal measure to Governor, staff and prisoners. The project also breathed new life for a short period into the Community meeting system whereby (as explained above) the prisoners jointly with the management played an important part in determining decisions affecting the life and regime of prisoners in the Unit. We have some concerns, however, that these community meetings would appear in recent times to have lost much of their impetus. Unless there are matters which the prisoners consider to be of major importance to them, the meetings tend now to be very brief and to concentrate on the day to day business of the running of the Unit.

10.5 In too many respects we were left with the impression that there was insufficient activity and movement. That comment applies empathically to the various aspects of the regime - indeed, there is no regime in the normal sense of the term. Each of the eight prisoners does his own thing which may amount to anything from frenzied activity to almost complete lethargy. Although we took the point made to us by some of the prisoners that the absence of instruction and order is difficult to cope with and itself constitutes a major challenge for prisoners in danger of becoming institutionalised, we cannot see that this approach necessarily does much to challenge the prisoners about their original offending behaviour or to prepare them effectively and in other than desultory

fashion against their eventual release. (It is for that reason that we have suggested that there should be visitor-free periods - see paragraph 6.6.) That thought itself raises a further problem. At the time of the Inspection all the prisoners were in the situation that no release dates had been determined or even envisaged. In this situation none of them was prepared to contemplate the possibility of a move to any other establishment. The consequent lack of movement itself contributed to the feeling of lethargy. The prisoners made clear that they did not wish compulsory movement elsewhere in the system and in the circumstances of the current prisoner population we see little hope of the Unit management achieving its continuing objective (as set out in Annex 1) of persuading the prisoners voluntarily to take such a step. Indeed the prisoners' main concern (or at least the main concern of one of them) was that, in the light of the atmosphere of stagnation surrounding the Unit, it might be decided that closure was the only solution. About this prospect they were understandably apprehensive. We can allay their fears to the extent that we do not recommend closure. But we do recommend that a firm decision is taken as soon as possible about the future nature of the Unit at Barlinnie in order to establish a clearer purpose for it within the SPS - particularly with regard to a policy to create movement in and out - so that it can be properly aligned with other aspects of the system.

10.6 In our last report we recommended that the word 'experimental' should be dropped. In this report we recommend that the word 'Special' should similarly disappear from the vocabulary associated with this Unit. It was special and will continue to be so but what was originally a badge of pride has now, as it were, become an albatross around the Unit's neck. The concept that some LTP's require special arrangements best met in a prison like the Unit set apart for their special needs is now accepted throughout the Service and the example has been copied in other countries. But the Unit must cease living in and on its past. Hence our recommendation in paragraph 10.5 that a decision be taken that the concept of unit prisons catering for small numbers of prisoners should be integrated into the SPS as a whole in a way which has hitherto been sadly if understandably lacking in the case of the Barlinnie Special Unit. If this requires a much fuller understanding on the part of incoming

prisoners that they cannot expect their stay to be indefinite, then so be it. The Unit is not intended to be either a rest cure or a reward but a sensible and in some cases a necessary part of a long-term sentence - what would now be called a significant feature in sentence planning. We have defended - and continue to defend - the view that the Unit does not represent a soft option for manipulative prisoners. But it should not be allowed to become a safe haven for long-term prisoners who have encountered serious difficulties in coming to grips with their sentence in the mainstream. Permanence, in our view, breeds complacency and lethargy. Almost worse still, it is very discouraging for other prisoners in the system, who might well have benefited from a spell in the Unit, if they become aware that there is little likelihood of a vacancy occurring.

10.7 Thus reformed the Unit should be able to contribute greatly with a secure future in the forefront of modern prison development well into the 21st century.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The Operational Instructions for the Unit, introduced in 1979, should be revised as a matter of priority (paragraph 2.6).

11.2 The Unit should be provided with its own budgets for maintenance, minor works and energy (paragraphs 8.5 and 9.6).

11.3 A firm decision should be taken as soon as possible about the future nature of the Unit to establish a clearer purpose for it within the SPS (paragraph 10.5).

11.4 The word 'Special' should be dropped from the Unit's title (paragraph 10.6).

12. POINTS OF NOTE (To be taken up with the Governor on subsequent visits by the Inspectorate.)

12.1 The Governor should ensure that cell security checks are carried out in accordance with the Unit's Operational Instructions (paragraph 3.2).

12.2 Management should review the current provision of staff facilities and take whatever steps are possible to maximise the space available (paragraph 4.22).

~~12.3 There should be set periods each day when visits are not allowed and those periods should be used for community focused activities involving all staff and prisoners (paragraph 6.6).~~

12.4 Management should re-affirm the Operational Instruction and the local rule which state that staff will be present in the cells area when visits are taking place and that cell doors will not be closed during visits (paragraph 6.7).

12.5 A more thorough but dignified system of searching bags, parcels, etc brought in by visitors should be introduced (paragraph 6.7).

12.6 All incoming personal mail should be opened in the presence of the relevant prisoner in accordance with Prison Rules (paragraph 6.8).

12.7 Management should ensure that food hygiene matters are kept constantly in the forefront so that acceptable standards are maintained at all times and constant vigilance should be maintained to ensure that bad practices are not allowed to recur (paragraph 8.4).

12.8 Fire doors should always be in the closed position and emergency exit signs should be installed (paragraph 9.8).

12.9 The Governor should ensure that all statutory obligations in relation to health and safety matters are adhered to at all times (paragraph 9.11).

STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic objectives for 1992-93 were:

- to complete the refurbishment and upgrading of the Special Unit.
- to continue pursuing value for money by training middle management in budgetary control techniques and devolving appropriate responsibility.
- to ensure that a high standard of hygiene and good food handling practices are maintained in keeping with the refurbishment of the Unit.

Progress

Refurbishment - Major works including: upgrading the heating system, providing a new kitchen and laundry, implementing the Fire Officer's recommendations and redecoration were completed in 1992-93.

Value for Money - Budgetary control training was incorporated in the curriculum for all staff and middle managers attended budgetary control meetings.

The evaluation of the increase in prisoner members from eight to nine, reported in the previous year's Annual Report, was completed and following advice from the Special Unit Psychiatrist and Psychologist that objective had been abandoned.

Hygiene - Completion of the refurbishment programme had greatly improved the general level of cleanliness and food handling and the local Environmental Health Department now visited and advised.

Continuing strategic objectives are:

~~To encourage prisoners to adopt a realistic view of their sentences with a return to mainstream prisons in view by highlighting the positive aspects of a planned progressive move towards liberation.~~

To submit a bid to Headquarters for a separate maintenance and minor works budget/programme for the Special Unit.

To improve facilities for prisoners' children and encourage prisoners to adopt a greater acceptance of responsibility for the behaviour of their children whilst visiting the Unit.

To continue to review the content and format of all Unit staff training to ensure its relevance to the work of the Special Unit and the Service generally.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

EMLO	-	Ethnic Minorities Liaison Officer
EOO	-	Equal Opportunities Officer
ERLO	-	Early Release Liaison Officer
GOB	-	Governor's Order Book
H and S	-	Health and Safety
HQ	-	Headquarters
HMP	-	Her Majesty's Prison
IC	-	In Charge
LRC	-	Local Review Committee
LTP	-	Long Term Prisoner
PE	-	Physical Education
PO	-	Principal Officer
PFC	-	Prisoner's Private Cash
RC	-	Roman Catholic
SO	-	Senior Officer
SPOA	-	Scottish Prison Officers' Association
SPS	-	Scottish Prison Service
STO	-	Staff Training Officer
VC	-	Visiting Committee