

MINUTES OF THE SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD IN THE DUMYAT MEETING ROOM, SPS COLLEGE, POLMONT ON 27 NOVEMBER 2024

Present: Ann McKechin, Non-Executive Director and Advisory Board Chair
Teresa Medhurst, Chief Executive, SPS
Linda Pollock, Deputy Chief Executive, SPS
Lynne Clow, Non-Executive Director
Ian Harley, RMAC Chair and Non-Executive Director
Andy Hodge, Director of Operations, SPS
Adam Jobson, Director of Organisational Development, SPS
Sharon Lawson, Executive Personal Assistant, SPS (Minutes) (attended virtually)
Gerry O'Donnell, Director of Finance, SPS
Gareth Rose, Head of Communications, SPS
Gill Stillie, Non-Executive Director
Lisa Taylor, Head of Corporate Strategy and Governance, SPS
Stephen Uphill, Non-Executive Director
Billy Watson, Non-Executive Director (attended virtually)

In Attendance: Suzy Calder, Head of Health (for the Deep Dive Discussion only)
Stephen Coyle, Head of Justice, SPS (for Sarah Angus) (attended virtually)

Introduction and Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting, in particular, Mr Coyle who was attending the meeting on behalf of Ms Angus. She also offered members' congratulations to Ms Taylor on her recent promotion as Head of Strategy and Planning.
2. The Chair advised the Board that Mr Evans had resigned his position as Non-Executive Director with immediate effect for personal reasons and members thanked him for his work whilst in post and wished him well in his future endeavours. Arrangements were currently being made to replace Mr Evans and it was hoped the new NED would attend the January Advisory Board meeting.
3. It was noted also that Ms McKechin, Ms Clow, Mr Harley and Mr Uphill had all accepted extensions to their current contracts for a further 3 year period, and Ms Stillie had accepted an extension for a further 6 month period.
4. The Chair referred to several issues that had arisen since the last meeting, including the continued rise in prison numbers and her meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs to discuss this, and she congratulated the SPS team for all their work on the Early Release Scheme and subsequent Bill which was due to be debated by the Scottish Parliament in December.

Apologies for Absence

5. Apologies for absence were received from Ms Angus.

Declarations of Interest

6. There were no new declarations of interest.

Draft Minutes of the Advisory Board Meeting Held on 25 September, Action Points and Matters Arising

7. The draft minutes of the meeting held on 25 September were agreed as a true record. The Action Tracker was updated during the discussion, with several items being closed.

Action: Ms Lawson

Chief Executive's Update

8. The Chief Executive's update touched on the following points:
- The recent sad death of HMP Greenock's Deputy Governor, Gerry Watt.
 - Ms Medhurst's appearance at the Criminal Justice Committee (CJC) meeting on 6 November.
 - SPS is working with the COVID Inquiry Team to provide the documentation that they require.
 - On 1 December, SPS' working week will reduce from 37 to 35 hours a week and all SPS teams were primed and ready for this change. NED colleagues congratulated everyone involved in this huge achievement for the organisation.
 - The Chief Executive advised that she may require the NEDs' assistance in navigating some challenging decisions and situations in relation to SPS' budget following the recent Scottish Government announcement. NED colleagues recommended that consideration be given to inviting the Director General (Learning and Justice) to a future Advisory Board meeting to discuss this issue further.

Action: Ms Medhurst/Ms Pollock

Deep Dive Discussion

Presentation from Gary Jenkins, Chief Executive, and Brian Moore, Board Chair, The State Hospital (TSH)

9. At this point, the Chair welcomed Messrs Jenkins and Moore to the meeting and thanked them for agreeing to speak to the Advisory Board about TSH, existing networks and further opportunities for collaboration with the newly announced Forensic Mental Health Board Advisory Group. She advised that members were particularly keen to discuss issues in relation to transfer, forensic spaces for women and personality disorder during the discussion.

10. Messrs Jenkins and Moore spoke about how TSH operates as an NHS Board and the key issues they are facing. TSH is one of 4 high secure hospitals in the UK and is designated as a special (ie national) NHS Board, operating a national service for Scotland and Northern Ireland, with its principal aim being to rehabilitate patients, ensuring safe transfer to appropriate lower levels of security.

11. There are 140 high-secure beds for male patients requiring maximum secure care at TSH. Patients are admitted to TSH under The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003/2015 and other related legislation because of their dangerous, violent or criminal propensities. Around 70% of patients are 'restricted' patients within the jurisdiction of the Scottish Ministers and this number also includes patients undergoing criminal court proceedings who are also subject to the supervision of Scottish Ministers. The average length of stay is just over 5 years, with individual lengths of stay ranging from less than one month to over 36 years.

12. Scottish Ministers announced in May that they will create a Forensic Mental Health Board for Scotland, using the existing legislation and functions of TSH to enhance the planning and governance of forensic mental health services in Scotland. This is in response to the Barron Review, and recognising that individuals assessed for treatment have been on the end of significant delays due to limited bed availability and the need for improved patient flow in forensic mental health in-patient services. SPS welcomes the potential opportunities that this Board will create, particularly the ability for it to lessen the transfer boundary challenges it faces. SPS has not been approached to be a member of the Advisory Group, but is keen to work with them to ensure the prison population is reflected and properly integrated in work for acute mental health patients and the work of the Board. SPS will also continue to engage with Scottish Government colleagues to identify an appropriate route to influence the work on behalf of SPS.

13. Advisory Board members posed a number of questions to Messrs Jenkins and Moore throughout the discussion, including:

- Their views of the purpose and function of the new Board.
- What measures could assist more timely transfers and how the new NHS Board will drive improvement.
- What they understand the timeline for the project to provide dedicated provision for women is and how best to support women in the meantime.
- Their views on how people with Personality Disorder are best supported and treated.

14. In summing up, the Chair thanked Messrs Jenkins and Moore for their detailed, interesting and thought-provoking presentation. She re-iterated that SPS was keen to work with them and would be happy to look at further opportunities to collaborate in future. [Messrs Jenkins and Moore left the meeting at this point.]

AB(NOV)01/24: Prison Population

15. Following on from the Chief Executive's update and subsequent discussion on population, Mr Hodge advised that the prison population on 27 November was 8,289.

16. Additional capacity for adult men at HMPYOI Polmont remains at capacity and Operations Directorate's Population team continues to work closely with the establishment to ensure spaces created by liberations and HDC releases are utilised by the wider estate to maintain this position. Due to the on-going population pressures, additional considerations have recently been identified and are in the process of development in relation to capacity expansion.

17. NED colleagues again raised their concerns in relation to staff welfare, and thanked Ms Medhurst and Mr Hodge for their respective updates.

AB(NOV)02/24: Improvement Framework Report Quarter 2 (July-September 2024)

18. This report provided an integrated account of organisational performance (including a review of the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP)) and risk, and a summary update as at the end of Quarter 2 of the 2024-25 reporting year. Owing to the Q1 report being a lighter-touch version, some of the information (both data and performance analysis) in this report was backdated to include both Qs1 and 2.

19. Members noted this report, and advised they would keep a watching brief on the impact of drone activity. They asked that a deep dive discussion on the Education contract be scheduled during 2025, and thanked Ms Taylor for her update.

Action: Ms Angus/Ms Lawson

AB(NOV)03/24: Financial Update/Budget Monitoring

20. This paper provided an update on the 2023-24 financial position as at 31 July and was discussed and noted by members. A fuller discussion on finance would be scheduled for the January meeting.

Action: Mr O'Donnell/Ms Lawson

AB(NOV)04/24: Performance Report on Private Sector Contracts

21. This paper provided an update on the operational and contractual performance of the 2 major private sector contracts managed by SPS - the Scottish Court Custody and Prisoner Escort Services (SCCPES) and the private operated prison at HMP Addiewell.

22. Members noted that the Contract Management Unit (CMU) continues to work closely with both private sector contractors to monitor performance against contractual expectations and to robustly hold the contractors to account, whilst maintaining and developing relationships.

Verbal Update: Workforce Metrics Report

23. Due to challenges in producing the People Metrics report, Mr Jobson did not provide a paper for discussion at this meeting, but instead gave a short verbal update on the key areas of attendance, training and workforce planning. A more detailed infographic report was also circulated to members before the meeting for their information.

24. NED colleagues asked for further detail in relation to the reasoning for the delay to the new payroll system and were advised that this would be discussed at the RMAC meeting later that afternoon.

RMAC Chair's Verbal Report

25. The RMAC meeting would follow the Advisory Board meeting and Mr Harley advised that members would be undertaking a deep dive on the GeoAmey Contract.

26. Mr Harley asked whether Advisory Board members felt there was a requirement for additional NED cover on RMAC. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to discuss this proposal in detail and members agreed instead to discuss this at another time.

Action: Mr Harley

Any Other Business

27. Members recognised that a Cyber Security Workshop was still to take place and agreed to a one-off additional Teams session next year in this respect.

Action: Ms Lawson

28. The NEDs asked that further establishment visits be arranged for them to HMPs Glenochil and Low Moss following the completion of Stage 2 of the Emergency legislation.

Action: Ms Lawson

Draft Agenda for January 2025 Meeting

29. The agenda for the January meeting was agreed as drafted. Ms McKechin advised that she would produce the next version of the Advisory Board Development Plan for approval at the January meeting.

Action: Ms McKechin

Date of Next Meeting

30. The next Advisory Board meeting will be held on **Wednesday 29 January 2025 from 0900-1200hrs in the Ben Cleuch Meeting Room, SPS College, Polmont.**

31. The Chair summed up the discussion, and the meeting overall, by again thanking Messrs Jenkins and Moore for their attendance, members for the full discussion that had taken place throughout the meeting, and Directors and their teams for their helpful papers.

Advisory Board Secretariat November 2024