
**Post-Inspection Update:
Relating to His Majesty's
Inspectorate of Prisons for
Scotland (HMIPS) Report on visit
to HMP & YOI Polmont 4 - 6
August 2025**

Inspection following the Fatal Accident Inquiry Determinations in relation to the deaths of William Lindsay (Brown) and Katie Allan ⁱ and Jack McKenzieⁱⁱ

Date of Update: 23 March 2026

1. Update Purpose

This post-inspection update recognises and notes HMIPS inspection report and the findings as they reflected the position at the time of the inspection in August. Since then, further progress has been made which is noted and provided below.

This update does not alter the inspection team's independent findings in their inspection report but provides a factual up-to-date overview of the improvements that have taken place since the inspection in August 2025.

2. Reporting

The HMIPS inspection findings are set out under four expected outcomes:

- Prisoners live in a safe and secure environment which actively reduces the risk of self-harm and suicide.
- Prisoners at risk of self-harm or suicide receive individualised care from a multidisciplinary team and have unhindered access to help, including from their families.
- Prisoners feel and are safe from victimisation, violence and other antisocial behaviour.
- Prisoner's families and friends are encouraged to interact with the prison, know how to raise concerns and contribute to their care.

We identified six themes from the report where there have been improvements since the inspection, and have summarised these in the accompanying table.

3. Table of Updates: SPS Progress since inspection in August 2025

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Update</u>
Time out of Cells, exercise spaces and purposeful activity	<p>Since the HMIPS inspection, young people are being offered more time out of cell, and a programme of developments to enhance daily structure, opportunities, and pro-social engagement across Polmont has since been developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Living Environment: A new in-hall painters work party has been introduced. The work party supports providing a cleaner, brighter environment which positively supports wellbeing as well as access to purposeful activity for young people. • Creative and Media Engagement: Increased participation in the Media Centre has been strengthened through partnership with Glass Performance arts charity. This now includes youth theatre performances where young people not only take part and develop editing and production skills, but also have the opportunity to invite friends, family, and other young people in the halls to attend and share in their work. • Targeted Youth Engagement: Kinetic Youth continue to provide structured support for all young people, including those who may be disengaged or isolated. Their presence in evenings and weekends has increased opportunities for healthy engagement, with weekend participation regularly exceeding 80 young people. • Skills and Qualifications: The Vocational Training Bricklaying work party has delivered hands on skills development, resulting in 74 SQA qualifications - 40 of which were achieved at Level 5. • Enhanced Daily Operation: The Monro Hall work party has been refreshed to ensure essential tasks such as hall hygiene and food service are delivered consistently and effectively. Elementary food hygiene and British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICs) awareness is being provided where relevant. • Support for Complex Needs: Paws for Progress continue to support vulnerable and complex young people through a stepped model of delivery. • Strengthened Recovery Support: A new Recovery Officer role has been created to provide proactive support to young people on their recovery journey. This proof-of-

	<p>concept role works alongside NHS Substance Misuse colleagues, and ensures every young person placed on Management of Offender at Risk due to Substance (MORS) policy receives a face-to-face visit of support. This is carried out in tandem with partner agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion Officers also continue to be integral to supporting and building on the confidence of young people, to integrate them in the regime.
Prisoner Induction	<p>Polmont has strengthened its induction programme, which now provides Manual Handling, Health & Safety Awareness, and where capacity allows, British Institute of Cleaning Science and Fire Awareness. These additions are designed to improve young people's safety, confidence and employability from the outset, supporting quicker access to work parties and vocational training.</p> <p>All new admissions are offered a Family Visit session.</p> <p>Family involvement in ICM case conferences shows a positive upward trend, increasing from 26.6% (Apr–Mar 24/25) to 32.4% (Apr–Feb 25/26).</p> <p>The Chaplaincy Team continues to support family engagement from a pastoral and spiritual perspective, including assisting foreign nationals with contact, and coordinating with partners for family support.</p>
Anti-ligature toolkit Implementation	<p>Since the inspection, SPS has developed a new anti-ligature audit toolkit, designed to systematically identify and assess ligature risks in cells. A proof-of-concept pilot has already been completed in Polmont's Monro Hall, with external evaluation confirming the early toolkit is effective, with further improvements recommended.</p> <p>Alongside this, SPS has created test spaces at Polmont to trial reduced ligature furniture and fixtures where possible, and a Ligature Reduction Solutions Panel now provides technical oversight for any new or replacement fixtures and fittings in cells across the SPS</p>

	<p>estate. This work will inform the development of national design standards and a future digital system to coordinate audits, repairs and capital planning across the estate.</p>
Signs of Life Technology Pilot	<p>Work to test Signs of Life monitoring technology has taken place across Polmont and Stirling, with devices from three suppliers installed as part of a national pilot in 12 cells. Early testing has shown core basic functionality, albeit with some reliability issues and occasional false alerts. SPS has now secured ethical approval for the next phase of live-alert testing. This will allow staff to assess how real-time alerts function in practice, and ensure that alert thresholds are accurate, meaningful, and sustainable for frontline operations.</p> <p>A structured calibration period is underway to refine alert sensitivity and reduce false positives. Staff guidance has been strengthened so technical issues can be escalated quickly. The evaluation running through 2026 will determine whether Signs of Life technology could be safely adopted more widely and how it could complement suicide prevention policies and emergency response procedures.</p>
Management of an Offender at Risk Due to Any Substance (MORS) Cases	<p>Since January, we have seen a sustained reduction in the number of young people requiring support under the MORS policy MORS in Polmont, with levels around 40–50% lower on average compared to December 2025.</p> <p>The introduction of a dedicated Recovery Officer has enabled a proactive, recovery focused model, with programmes, partnerships and wellbeing activities helping young people to access support. This enhanced approach has also deepened links with community recovery organisations and mutual aid groups, alongside improved staff capability through specialist training.</p>
Anti-Bullying	<p>While SPS develops a new anti-bullying strategy, Think Twice remains in place to support young people and adults across the SPS estate. In Polmont, Community Safety Officers play a vital role in the education of young people around bullying and the impact of this within our community.</p>

4. Forward Look

While Polmont has continued to make meaningful improvements since the inspection in August, further positive changes are already underway within Polmont and across the wider SPS estate. The following developments outline the next stages of our work and what young people, families, staff and partners can expect moving forward.

- **Outdoor Exercise Spaces:** Funding has now been approved to overhaul Polmont's outdoor exercise areas. Work will shortly begin to upgrade the open-air exercise yard and refurbish the astroturf pitches.
- **Scottish Football Association Partnership:** Early discussions with the SFA aim to secure access to the Introduction to Coaching programme for Polmont, enabling staff to run football-based activities that increase young people's time in structured sport and support the development of teamwork and relationship building skills.
- **Expanded Visiting Capacity:** As part of the wider Roster and Regime Review, work is underway to expand visiting capacity in Polmont, including increasing seating, adding a new morning session, and balancing population groups during visit times.
- **Improved Visits Environment:** In Polmont, the visit room has been freshly repainted, with new furniture to follow, creating a more welcoming and comfortable space for young people and their families.
- **Developing a New Anti-Bullying Strategy:** SPS are developing a new Anti-Bullying Strategy to replace Think Twice, led through a multi-agency Short-Term Working Group and the Polmont Operational Development Group. The aim is to create a more consistent, trauma-informed, and proactive response to bullying. A test-for-change pilot is planned for 2026 to trial, evaluate, and refine the new approach ahead of wider implementation.
- **Operationalising the Commitment to Change:** We will begin operationalising our 2025 Commitment to Changeⁱⁱⁱ by replacing Talk to Me with a new crisis response pathway across the SPS estate. This work will ensure people are supported in environments that are both physically and psychologically safe, strengthening how we respond to those in crisis across the estate. A new training package will be developed to support this shift, which we expect to trial later in the year before wider implementation.

4. Conclusion

We welcome HMIPS's inspection and the valuable insight their report provides into the experience of young people at HMP & YOI Polmont. The findings will help shape and strengthen our ongoing work, and we fully recognise the contribution that independent scrutiny makes to improvement across the service.

While this update reflects developments that have taken place since the inspection period of August 2025, the wider learning from this report will inform our approach.

5. Contact for Further Information

For clarification or questions, please contact:
Scottish Prison Service

spsnews@prisons.gov.scot

ⁱ [SHERIFFDOM OF SHERIFF COURT](#)

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ⁱⁱⁱ [Commitment to Change- Suicide Prevention Pathway in Scottish Prisons.pdf](#)