

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Daniel GUNN

Support person present: No.

1. My name is Daniel Edward Gunn. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1950. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Education and background

2. I was brought up in the North East of Scotland. I graduated from the University of Aberdeen with a Master of Arts degree in history and politics in 1972. I studied for a second degree in African politics at the University of Birmingham from 1974 until 1975. I then studied part-time at Glasgow Graduate School of Law for a postgraduate Master of Science degree in criminal justice. It was a taught course over two years 2001-3.
3. After graduating from Aberdeen, I worked with the Voluntary Service Overseas in Nigeria. There were plenty of social science graduates in developing African countries. The problem was getting them to work in the countryside. There was a massive drive towards urbanisation and I had been teaching at a brand new rural school. Initially, I had intended to return to Nigeria after obtaining my degree in Birmingham. Whilst studying in Birmingham, I decided that it wasn't appropriate for me to go back to Africa. I declined the offer of a contract to stay on in Nigeria. At that time, I probably envisaged an academic career.
4. Almost immediately after starting my course in Birmingham, I decided that I didn't want an academic career. Having started the course, I wanted to complete it. I enjoyed living in Birmingham at that time. I had had quite a restricted upbringing and I liked life in

England's second biggest city. I started looking around for jobs. The obvious one for me was teaching so I applied to Moray House in Edinburgh to train as a teacher. I had been sounded out about a lectureship in politics at a polytechnic in Coventry, but I really wanted to go back to Scotland. It was the start of the devolution and independence debate and the political scene was very vibrant. I wanted to be a part of that.

Career in prison management

Recruitment to and training for prison management

5. One Sunday, whilst reading *The Observer* newspaper, I saw an advert for management positions in the Prison Services. I can still remember the heading of the advert, which was, "Management with a social purpose." It caught my eye. I applied to the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), thinking that I wasn't the sort of person they were looking for. It was a two and a half day interview. I went there with the arrogant attitude that they had to sell the job to me rather than the other way around. Two Assistant Governors came to talk to us in the evening. They made a big impact on me and very much sold it to me. I then really tried to make an effort and sell myself.

6. We were in groups of six as part of the interview process. There were some people in my group whom I took an instant dislike to, which made me wonder what sort of person they were looking for. However, I quite enjoyed the interview and the exercises. Much to my surprise, I was offered a place. My friends in Birmingham were appalled that I was joining such a supposedly right-wing organisation. They didn't understand how I could be interested in working in prisons. The training involved a two year programme. I thought it was an interesting training format and that, if the job wasn't for me, I could walk away and it wouldn't be time wasted. I did placements as a prison officer, in social work and in mental health. I did an intensive management course. I gained lots of experience in prison. It was a well put together course. It was the third year of this training format and it served all three UK prison services.

7. The unique feature of prison management is that you have your finger in so many pies. You're working with prisoners and staff. You have your management agenda. You have an external environment and all the pressures. If you read literature from the 1960s and 1970s, it talks about a uniform staff and prisoner culture. That was not the reality. The world is dynamic and diverse. People think of institutions as boring and repetitive. The routine is everything and there is the potential for abuse. Erving Goffman, the Canadian sociologist, defines a "Total Institution". How do you govern or manage a total institution to be fair to everybody? In those days, a lot of the governance was informal and discretionary. There were next to no rules. Standing orders, the written rules and procedures of the Prison Service, were the absolute last resort. Nowadays, we go to rules and regulations first but in those days we went to rules and regulations last. I experienced that environment and I was quite interested in it.

Overview of posts held within the Scottish Prison Service

8. When I completed my training, I decided to give myself five years in the job. When I completed my training I continued at Perth Prison, where I had been an assistant governor under training. I remained there until 1981 until I moved to Dungavel, which at that time was a semi-open prison in Ayrshire. I was deputy governor there, but it wasn't a promotion because it was a small establishment. There was only the governor and myself there. The governor at Dungavel was certainly Scotland's and probably Britain's first female prison governor, Agnes Curran. Laterally, she was winding down as she retired in 1984. That was good for me because it gave me lots of experience of senior management, which I hadn't had at Perth.
9. I was promoted in 1985 and left Dungavel. I was transferred to England in 1985. There were initially two, then reduced to one post at the Staff College in Wakefield. That was where recruits to the governor grade were trained. They also ran a number of specialist courses. I was newly married so moving to England was a bit of an upheaval, but it was a great opportunity for me. I met a lot of English colleagues and had a lot of downtime. My job was to look after the Scottish recruits on the residential courses. That consisted of two sessions of eight weeks per year and I could do what I liked the

rest of the time. My predecessor suggested that I might like to get involved in some of the English courses. I did that and got involved in teaching some management courses in race relations, which were a particular interest of mine, also hostage management. Hostage management had become an issue in England and was to become a major issue in Scotland just after I had left. I had to find existing material and devise my own material, which I quite enjoyed doing.

10. Just after I left Scotland, the first hostage incident took place at Edinburgh Prison. It was followed by other incidents. There was a massive upheaval in the Scottish Prison Service. They were opening a new prison at Shotts, scheduled to open in 1987. It was for long term adult prisoners. After working at the training college in Wakefield, I was brought back to form part of the management team and help open Shotts. I was there for four months in the summer of 1987. It was a very difficult time and one of the unhappiest of my career. It brought home the problem of everything being done on a discretionary basis. They were opening up a brand new prison and bringing in staff from other prisons in the central belt. Everyone was doing it their way so there was the Edinburgh way, the Barlinnie way and the Glenochil way. We had to create a Shotts way, which meant writing things down. Nobody wanted to write things down.
11. The management team that was put into Shotts were all very senior and experienced people, but they were experienced in what they had been used to. There was no vision. There was no sense of creating something new at Shotts. There was no vision at all in the Prison Service. The whole thing was collapsing around everyone's ears. There had been incident after incident with long term prisoners, mostly former Peterhead prisoners. People were struggling to understand what was going on and it was a difficult time for the service.
12. When the incidents were at their height, there was a lot of public interest. Andrew Coyle, who was then the chair of the Governors' Committee, was interviewed as part of a panel for a television programme. He made a point about the lack of training for Governors. We got a lot of training when we started but we didn't get a lot after that. Staff training hadn't changed at all over the years. There was a great need to change training. That resonated with the powers that be at that time. I was given the job of

setting up what we called the Training, Planning and Development Unit (TPDU) for the Scottish Prison Service.

13. My job was to revolutionise training. I was to set up a new unit in Polmont College. My remit was to change the training for officers and Governors. The remit was to break away from England and devise our own training for those of governor grade. It was a great job and a very influential post. I had a staff training officer from Edinburgh seconded to me. He later became a senior governor. I had a person who had just retired from the schools' inspectorate and he was given to me part-time. When I first met him, I wasn't sure what he had to offer me. I was totally wrong. It was a very good lesson in avoiding first impressions. His name was Hugh Smith and he became a great source of information and advice. He was very good at evaluating the training and encouraging the trainers to pause, reflect and be self-critical in a safe supportive place.
14. We also had an objective to change the trainers, which was where Hugh's expertise really came into play. Previously, the trainers were all ageing Chief Officers who had been taken out of the field ten years or so earlier. They were handing out their war stories. There was a problem with people sitting through the training and then forgetting it. They took the view that they learned the job on the job. I was trying to change that and make training relevant, credible and authoritative. We recruited a new group of carefully selected trainers, who were all trained at Jordanhill College in Glasgow. It was one of the top training colleges in Scotland. They were given a fairly long stint at Jordanhill and we really pushed them and put them through their paces. They were shown how to draw up a lesson plan and how to teach it, how to involve the students and measure impact. It's bread and butter stuff nowadays, but in the 1980s it was revolutionary. It introduced a big change to the status of trainers.
15. New recruits would be appointed and usually go to their local prison for a week or a fortnight. They would then go on their course at Polmont. The main difference in the training was a move away from large groups sitting in lecture theatres. We changed it to group work. Recruits were taught in groups of six or twelve and each group had its own tutor. The focus was on face to face training, responsivity, verbal and interpersonal skills.

16. There was training in control and restraint. That was already in place and probably started in the early-1980s. We continued with that but used specialised trainers. We did develop some additional specialist courses. Nationally there was a focus on difficult prisoners and an Advisory Committee was set up in the mid-1980s. It consulted with people brought in from the outside plus representatives of the unions to focus on violent prisoners who were in segregation. Prisoners who were in segregation for longer than three months were referred to the advisory committee. The objective was to manage them back safely into circulation.

17. Prison officers were recruited by adverts followed by a written application form. There was no minimum education requirement. That came in twenty years later but should have come in at that point. Career civil servants in human resources would assess the applications at headquarters. They would decide whether applicants would get an interview. Candidates were then interviewed by a three person panel. One civil servant would chair the interview panel, usually alongside two middle managers with an operational background. They were looking for people who looked and sounded the part. There was a lot of emphasis on brawn and physique. I'm pretty sure there was still a minimum height requirement, which was later abolished. Male and female staff were still separate at that time. Staffing wasn't combined until 1991. There was really a pressure for numbers. We needed more staff so we needed more recruits. We had to speed up the training and deliver more courses, which meant less time to evaluate the training. Overtime was abolished as part of the 'Fresh Start' which was implemented by all three UK services. This was the driver for more staff.

18. The programme we devised meant that new recruits would come back to the college on two occasions later on in the year. This was designed to act as a refresher, keep up their commitment to training and create a sense of camaraderie. That element was built in. Training within the different prisons varied from institution to institution, depending on the governor's particular interests. There might be one day courses. The pressure was really about getting people into posts and having staff on the ground rather than training. Staff sickness was becoming more of an issue. The issue of staff being damaged by incidents at work was gradually emerging.

19. My one regret is that I didn't get involved in the recruitment of staff. We ended up recruiting the same people as before and yet we were expecting more of them. We were trying to envisage a different job for the prison officer on the gallery. With hindsight, I don't think we put enough resource into the aptitude of candidates to be a prison officer. It wasn't given enough priority.
20. We didn't have a united team. The organisation was changing dramatically and not everybody was on board. Some people were still at the station and others were charging ahead in top gear. There were all sorts of people in between. The more traditional employees often ended up doing recruitment. It was seen as a safe place for them where they couldn't do any harm. As a matter of fact, they could do harm if they were recruiting the wrong people.
21. I was only in my post at the training college for a year, but it was a great year. I was then promoted again, having waited ten years for my first promotion. I got my second promotion in three years, which was indicative of the state of change and turmoil in the service. A lot of staff were casualties of that, but so were a lot of Governors and senior civil servants. A lot of people realised that they weren't coping with the turmoil within prisons and the need for massive change. Many realised they needed to get out. People were going off on sick leave, leaving voluntarily or retiring early.
22. In 1988, I went to work in the Special Unit at Barlinnie. The fiftieth anniversary of the unit being set up is approaching, as it was set up in February 1973. I was the governor at that unit for three years before being transferred to Greenock Prison in 1991. It had been completely rebuilt and modernised a few years earlier. It had been the female prison before Cornton Vale and reopened in 1986. Initially, it had been a long-term prison, then a prison for young offenders. It then became a local prison. That had resulted in the staff being very flexible and positive. There were good staff there.
23. We had a dreadful time with suicides at Greenock, which probably did scar me. There were a variety of causes and backgrounds. We did hold young offenders on remand, but the suicides when I was there were middle-aged men. Some of them were on remand and some were long-term prisoners who realised that their future wasn't good.

The worst time I had at Greenock was two suicides on consecutive days on the same flat in the same hall with the same staff. It was horrific.

24. I remained at Greenock for five years before being promoted to become governor of Polmont in 1996. I was in that post for eight years before moving to take up a new post as deputy director of prisons. That was my first posting at headquarters. My role there was managing the smaller prisons. At that time, there were six large prisons and eight small prisons. I had the thankless but fascinating task of governing the Governors of the smaller prisons.
25. I then became governor of Edinburgh Prison from 2006 until 2008. For the first and only time in my life, I requested a transfer to Glenochil. I was fed up with travelling from my home in Dunblane to Edinburgh. I wasn't very happy at Edinburgh. Although it was an interesting prison and there was a lot happening, I never really felt quite at ease. When the position of governor at Glenochil came up, I asked for a transfer. When I went to Glenochil, the Young Offenders Institution had already been closed so I didn't have responsibilities towards young offenders there. I thought that I'd be at Glenochil until I retired. In 2012, there was a change of Chief Executive in the Scottish Prison Service. It became clear that my line manager wasn't getting on with the person who got the job. She left very suddenly and the new Chief Executive asked me to be acting director. I was close to retirement, but the chief executive felt it would give him time to decide who he wanted to be director.
26. I thought I would only be in that role for about six months, but it turned out to be about eighteen months. I was conscious of my legacy. I had a short time as director and so I wondered what difference I could actually make in that short period of time. My daily priority was getting Grampian Prison open. There were tensions and divisions behind the scenes, which took up a lot of my time and required phenomenal patience. I got Grampian open and then I retired, 38 years after starting at Perth.
27. I had an interesting and, for the vast majority of the time, enjoyable career. I looked forward to going to work and working with staff and colleagues. One of the great things about prisons, despite their image, is that people have a huge amount of discretion as

to how they do their jobs. If you have the right attitude, skills and mind set, you can do so much. You work with prisoners and specialists. Your day can be very busy and interactive. There's a lot of variety. Some of the prisoners do not want to be in that particular jail. Some of the staff don't want to be there. Most of the professionals you come across want to be there, but not all of them. A Governor is managing a great range of people and is accountable for every part of the prison.

Attitudes to young offenders

28. There were no training courses specific to dealing with young offenders. In terms of the big picture, interest in youth offending had dropped down the pecking order around that time. When I joined the prison service in 1975, the informal hierarchy was women, young offenders, long-term adults, short-term adults and remand. Nobody was remotely interested in remand prisoners at that time. Ten years later, women and young offenders had dropped down the pecking order. Interest in long-term male adult prisoners had shot up. When I joined the Prison Service, there were three major figures within the governor grade in Scotland, Charles Hills, Gordon Neave and HEO [REDACTED]. They were seen as a colossus. HEO [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED]. Hills and Neave were seen as innovative in the way that they had dealt with young people. Charles Hills was the governor of Polmont and Gordon Neave was the first governor of Glenochil when it opened in 1976. Both had prioritised young people. Gordon Neave was seen as a visionary and very much set the agenda for Glenochil. Charles Hills was one of the founders of an organisation called Sixth Circle, which was about bringing borstal boys into contact with other disadvantaged groups. It still continues today and I was chair of the organisation in the 1990s and throughout the noughties.
29. Those two men were innovative and community orientated. There were two open borstals at Noranside and Castle Huntly. Polmont didn't have a fence around it. Security wasn't seen as a big issue. Treatment and training was the phrase often used. The borstal sentence was two years, but in practice borstal boys usually served nine months, sometimes less. They very rarely served twelve months. The emphasis was on giving them some training and education. They were then released with some form

of aftercare, as there was a statutory requirement for aftercare for the remainder of the two-year sentence.

30. I can't give a simple answer as to why there was a change in the hierarchy and interest in young offenders reduced. Both of those Governors moved into adult prisons and nobody came in behind them. They hadn't nurtured anybody to take on their interest in under 21s. It became part of the culture that long-term adults were the name of the game. There had been three young offender sentences available to Sheriffs from the mid-1960s onwards. Young Offenders Institutions started in the mid-1960s at Edinburgh, Barlinnie and laterally Dumfries. There was also the Detention Centre at Glenochil and Borstal Training at Polmont. The number of young offenders in institutions dropped when Borstal Training was abolished as a sentence in 1981. Detention Training had also been abolished. The numbers dropped dramatically. The number of prisons for under 21s dropped. I think those changes may have coincided with the shift in interest away from young offenders.
31. When the Training, Planning and Development Unit was set up, there was no specific training for dealing with young offenders. They weren't seen as a distinct group. There was no discussion about looking at the needs of young offenders or prisoners who may have had adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). There were no champions for young offenders after Gordon Neave retired in 1983 and Charles Hills left to go to Edinburgh. Polmont became a Young Offenders Institution, but there was no vision for it. The only debate was about the need for a fence around it. To me, that was a pretty sterile debate but for a lot of people security was the key.
32. Dumfries Young Offenders Institution got the bulk of the most difficult young offenders. In the late-1960s, a number of members of the Glasgow razor gangs were incarcerated and given quite long sentences. Dumfries became a bit like Peterhead for difficult prisoners under the age of 21. They would then reach the age of 21 and move to an adult prison.

Report by Doctor Chiswick's Working Group on Suicide Precautions at Glenochil

33. I recall the publication of Doctor Chiswick's report into suicide prevention at Glenochil Young Offenders Institution and Detention Centre in 1985. I think that a lot of the report was seen as being specific to Glenochil. I was involved in the Association of Scottish Prison Governors, which had been set up in the late 1970s. I became secretary in 1980 and continued in that role for seven years. We were interested in the professional side of the job and didn't take any role in pay and conditions. We struggled for numbers. The Governors who were interested were very interested and the Governors who weren't were totally disinterested. We did have a meeting programme and we had talks throughout the year. I remember that Doctor Chiswick gave us a talk about his report. There was some interest in suicides, but not a huge amount at that point. Even in England, there wasn't much focus on self-harm or the prevention of self-harm when I was based in the staff college there.
34. At the time, my take was that a lot of Doctor Chiswick's report was Glenochil specific. There were some interesting issues, but along with a lot of ongoing issues at the time. There was no policy development at headquarters in respect of that kind of thing. It was just about managing day by day. When Ken Forbes became the Director of the service, he had had impressed people with his demeanour, style and impact. He died suddenly and Alistair Thomson took over the role. He was a very cautious civil servant. He openly said that we were an operational service and we responded to operational issues. The idea that we could actually manage the service and anticipate and plan ahead was not part of the senior management culture. It was day to day management.
35. There was a view that the suicides in Glenochil were not because of the conditions, which were seen as reasonably good compared to many of the adult prisons. It had been built in the 1960s and people didn't think conditions were a credible factor. It was thought that the suicides at Glenochil were caused by young people experimenting sexually or being fearful of their future prospects.
36. I don't know whether the report's recommendations were implemented at Glenochil. If they were, it would have only been nominally as Glenochil was going to be turned into

an adult prison. The detention centre was going to stay with young offenders but the rest was to be converted into an adult prison. The number of young offenders had dropped. The number of adult prisoners had increased so that was really the focus.

37. Doctor Chiswick's report would not have had any strategic impact on institutions. It would have impacted upon the few people within the Scottish Prison Service who were interested in it and who had read it. It would have played a big part in development of their understanding of the issues, but I don't think it had an impact on the service as a whole. I think there was interest in forms of suicide, such as hanging and autoerotic asphyxiation. 'Through care' was a term that was gaining in acceptance. I think most prison staff and Governors linked suicide to prisoners being fearful of leaving prison. They were fearful of what was waiting for them, of family tensions and of the future.

Perth Prison

38. I finished my training and began work as a fully established assistant governor in 1977. I remained at Perth Prison until 1981. It was a multi-function prison housing short-term prisoners from the local courts and long-term prisoners. It was a maximum security prison as it had a lot of category A prisoners at that time. It was a traditional spoke-like prison with halls going off at tangents from the centre.
39. There were four assistant Governors at Perth Prison, although two were under training. I had responsibility for A and C hall. A hall was for short-term convicted prisoners, which at that time was defined as those serving sentences of eighteen months and under. C hall contained a real mix of prisoners, which was great training for me. There were four floors. The bottom level was punishments and category A prisoners, including Robert Francis Mone. The second flat was for remand prisoners of all ages, including young offenders. The third flat was a mix of long-term prisoners who were starting their sentences and some men who had been downgraded from the semi open prison at Dungavel or Open or TFF (Training for Freedom). The top flat was all long-term prisoners starting their sentences.

Conditions

40. C hall was housing category A prisoners so security was extremely important. Robert Francis Mone was one of two men who broke out of Carstairs in 1976. He had his own cell and two officers with him wherever he went. Even when he was in his cell, there were two officers outside his cell.

41. The conditions in the prison were dreadful. The condition of the cells was poor. There was no dining by association in C hall. Prisoners collected their meals on a tray and took it back to their cells. Young remands might have single cells or shared cells, depending on the numbers. I remember that I managed to get a post upgraded to senior officer in charge of the second flat. I argued that remand prisoners were important, but nobody else wanted anything to do with remands. They were seen as the Procurator Fiscal's responsibility. The hall overall was a complete mix of prisoners, but it was trouble free during my time there.

42. Remands in C hall were locked up nearly all day. There was meant to be no mixing of young remands and convicted prisoners. Staff were very careful in that regard. They collected their meals at different times. Some young remands may have cleaned the flat, but they didn't do any work out with the flat. They didn't go for any education. We didn't have any education in Perth until much later. We only had one teacher who came from Perth College two half days a week. She worked with convicted prisoners, not remands.

43. The prisoners had an hour's exercise. I think we tried to bring recreation in for them in the afternoon, but the facilities were much worse than the other three halls. There was only a small recreation room. The young remands could get visits. In those days, they could get daily weekday visits but I don't think any of them got anything near daily visits. I can't remember there being any deaths amongst young offenders at Perth while I was there, but I may be wrong about that. I can't remember any external inspections while I was there.

Caseload

44. My role was very much prisoner-orientated and casework. I did a lot of casework and very little management. I prepared a lot of custody reports for remand prisoners who were under the age of 21. I think there were probably about twenty young remands in Perth Prison at any one time. Borstal wasn't abolished as a sentence until 1981. Perth Prison accepted prisoners primarily from the Dundee, Cupar and Perth Sheriff Courts. They would remand prisoners under the age of 21 into custody for borstal reports.
45. The young people on remand were getting a taste of prison. Throughout my career, I kept coming across people who believed in deterrence. They believed that you could deter people from doing what they would otherwise do because of the consequences of their actions. I am a complete sceptic with regards deterrence. I think there is very little evidence to support its efficacy. However, a lot of Judges, Sheriffs and police officers seem to believe in deterrence. It seems to be part of the police culture, throughout the ranks.
46. My primary job at Perth was writing borstal reports. Under 21s would be remanded for two weeks. We had to move quite quickly. The office sent out forms to a school if the youngster was still at school or had recently left. We would also write to the social worker, if he had one. They had to send these forms back quickly, which they did. After the office had done all the paperwork, I would pick up the file, bring the young person down and interview him for thirty or forty minutes. I would then make a recommendation to the Sheriff about what should happen to him. You got to know what different Sheriffs wanted. Some wanted specific recommendations and some didn't. I could recommend probation or custody. If it was custody, I would give a reason for one of the three options, Detention Centre, Young Offenders Institution or Borstal Training.
47. I remember one of my colleagues took great delight in the fact that I got my wording wrong in one report. I suggested that the young man did not need any kind of sentence. The Sheriff did not take kindly to that and criticised me publicly. My Governor didn't bat an eyelid. I was surprised that I wasn't hauled in and told not to do it again. Maybe

they assumed that I would learn my lesson and be more careful in the wording of my reports. I think there was an expectation that the Sheriff would impose a custodial sentence, otherwise why remand in custody? I still hold to the view that a lot of Sheriffs use remand as a punishment. I've met a lot of Sheriffs over the years and the iron curtain comes down when I talk to them about this. They emphatically deny it.

Complaints procedure

48. I didn't get any complaints from remand prisoners and there were next to no incidents. The under 21s and over 21s mixed quite easily. If a prisoner wanted to make a complaint, he could ask to see the Governor, which would be me. If the prisoner didn't like my response, he could petition the Secretary of State. He would get a piece of paper on which to write the complaint and it would be sent to Edinburgh. It would be read and answered by civil servants in Edinburgh, who usually gave the same response that we had given. Complaints weren't commonplace. There wasn't really a complaints culture and people weren't encouraged to complain.
49. Remand prisoners weren't too interested in their conditions. They were more interested in what was going to happen to them. They wanted to know when they were going to go to court and what would happen to them at court. Although there might be an expectation that offenders were aggressive and assertive on the outside, in prison most of them were very passive. In those days, there was a great acceptance of conditions.
50. We surveyed prisoners for the first time in 1990. That was a massive change in culture, to ask prisoners what they thought of prison. It sent out a very powerful message, that we were actually interested in what they said. Initially it was an annual basis. We continually had the problem of demonstrating that we were listening and making changes as a result. The first issue that came out from the first climate survey was that prisoners wanted better visits. They didn't complain about conditions in cells, sanitation or their cellmates. The overwhelming issue was prisoners wanting better visits and more visits. As a result, a body later called *Families Outside* was set up by a governor Alec Spencer. It tried to reflect that concern. Visits suddenly shot up the

agenda of managers and Governors. We probably needed that push. It took people by surprise. People like me thought that the complaints would be about conditions, but it was all about more, better and longer visits.

51. My take on prisoner culture in the late 1970s and early 1980s was that it was pretty passive and uncritical. Violence was often premediated and connected to gangs outside. It was bringing the outside inside. We didn't even get any complaints about the food. Occasionally, prisoners would complain about the healthcare. Perth Prison had a dreadful doctor. You couldn't possibly send a complaint to him. He got really annoyed. If a prisoner complained that he had been seen by the nurse and not the doctor, I would tell him there wasn't a whole lot I could do. I would reassure him that his condition would improve and if it didn't, he could report sick again. Very occasionally, a prisoner would insist that he had not been dealt with properly and the complaint would be sent to the surgery. It would get very short shrift from the doctor.
52. Health was a minuscule part of the prison at that time, which is the biggest change that I saw in the course of my career. The nurses were all prison officers, which didn't change until the mid-1990s. They were prison officers first and nurses second. There was a part-time doctor, who just came in for the money and wasn't remotely interested in the health of prisoners. In those days, the prisoners were in effect marched in and out.

Polmont Young Offenders Institution, Brightons

53. I was promoted to become governor of Polmont in 1996. Polmont was a Young Offenders Institution for prisoners aged from 16 to 21. The numbers varied and they started to go down overall during my tenure. Occasionally, we went above five hundred prisoners but we also went below three hundred. We were very rarely overcrowded. After I left Polmont in 2004, the number of young offenders increased. That number has dropped phenomenally since around 2010. At that time, I thought it couldn't last but it's been a sustained drop which is great for society. During my time Dumfries and Glenochil stopped taking young offenders. Polmont became Scotland's only YOI.

54. Polmont had been a private school and was bought for use as a 'Borstal' by the Home Department in 1912. They had been reluctant to follow England in Scotland and have borstals, but they did then decide to have a Borstal and it was Polmont. It was a mix of old and new buildings. It had been added to over the decades in a completely haphazard fashion. It was a big site. It had good relations with the local community. A lot of the staff lived in quarters next to the institution so your neighbours were your own staff. When Polmont opened, it was probably out on its own in the Brightons area and was largely a green field site. When I arrived, it was completely surrounded by housing. Quarters had long since been sold off.
55. There were so many different residential units. They were all named and numbered in different ways, alphabetically, geographically and with nicknames. There was A wing, which was also known as 'ally-cally' and assessment, so it had three names. There was north wing and C wing, which had just been closed for redevelopment. There were east, west and south wings. There was an external training for freedom unit out with the prison. They were all different, except for east and west wing which had been built and designed at the same time.
56. When I took up my post as governor, I hadn't visited Polmont for a very long time and I didn't know what to expect. I wasn't given a briefing. My line manager was the SPS Area Director for the North and East, Mike Duffy. The chief executive, Tony Cameron, was his line manager. Of the four people on my promotion board, one of them was my line manager and one of them had been my line manager earlier on in my career. The latter took me aside afterwards and said that they needed someone with vision at Polmont and that it needed a shake-up. He didn't tell me what that shake-up should be or set out any vision, but he was clearly aware that things needed to change at Polmont.
57. It was a promotion for just one post. In my previous promotions, I'd been one of a group. This was the first time that I'd been promoted on my own and it was obvious what the job was going to be. My line manager summoned me to his office. I thought I was going to get a briefing about what was expected of me. Instead, he said that he

didn't know how I'd managed to get so much money for Greenock Prison but I shouldn't expect to any additional money for Polmont.

First impressions

58. The prison estate was the first thing that I noticed about Polmont. There were two halls in which the conditions were absolutely appalling. Having come from what was probably the best equipped prison in Scotland, I couldn't believe it. One of the other halls was being rebuilt but I found that there was no plan or vision for what to do with this unit. It had been C wing, also known as Carrick House. It had housed young people who were referred to in unpleasant terms, such as 'vulnerables' and 'bruisables'. Young people with pretty extreme behavioural problems were housed in Carrick House. There was a psychiatrist, Fergus Stallard, who spent a lot of his time there. I never saw it in practice, but from what I picked up it was a very caring unit. Some people would describe it as a therapeutic community. It was very small, housing about 18 to 20 prisoners. There was another wing, south wing, which was also being used to house vulnerable prisoners.
59. My first impressions were about the poor conditions in two of the halls. I then picked up upon it being apparent that Polmont was far behind the adult prisons in terms of culture. It struck me as still being a very authoritarian and hierarchical culture, both in terms of the staff and the young people. For example, surnames were still used for prisoners and staff. Use of first names had become the norm in other prisons. It was next door to the college where lots of training and activity went on. It seemed to me none of that had impacted upon Polmont. It was as if it had an iron curtain around it. It was completely oblivious to all the changes in the adult set-up after the incidents in the 1980s.
60. Between 1985 and 1988, there were a number of incidents of hostage-taking and protests in adult prisons. There had been one incident after another. There was then a new broom at headquarters. There was a new chief executive, a lot of Governors retired and younger Governors were promoted. There was a new interest in policy.

Our first policy document was called, 'Custody and Care'. The second was called, 'Assessment and Control', but that was a disaster and was quickly forgotten about.

61. The really big document came out in 1990 and was called, 'Opportunity and Responsibility'. It was a complete sea change in how we managed and helped prisoners. It reversed all of our policies. The idea was that long-term prisoners would be treated as responsible, unless and until they showed that they were behaving irresponsibly. Prisoners didn't have to jump through hoops or prove themselves. They were accepted, treated, managed and listened to as responsible people unless they demonstrated otherwise. Along with that, we committed to giving them a range of opportunities. We were trying to axe the term rehabilitation and it was now an opportunities agenda. The emphasis was on choice, on asking prisoners how they wanted to serve their sentence. We would give them opportunities to address their offending behaviour. We offered courses, encouragement and advice. If they chose not to accept those opportunities, that was all well and good as long as they weren't disruptive, difficult or dangerous.
62. It was a complete turnaround in approach, but nobody in Polmont had ever heard of 'Opportunity and Responsibility'. Although it had been designed for the adult prison population, it became a model for all populations as the 1990s progressed. The language and thinking behind it, the staff training and terms like case-working and group officers and personal officers became uniform throughout SPS, except in Polmont. I think that was indicative of how young offenders had dropped off the agenda. Governors of Polmont had come and gone. There was a marked turnover. Nobody was interested in setting their stall out by trying to change Polmont. Elsewhere, there was a much more relaxed atmosphere. There were no incidents of disorder in the 1990s, so it was clearly working.
63. I also observed a basic desire to lock up if not everybody then the majority. There were lots of work parties, but there were very few young people in them. Staff were locking up young people for much of the day. That was often done with the young person's agreement. They didn't want to go to a work party or to do anything. A lot of young people in custody are apathetic. They weren't necessarily difficult or demanding, they

just couldn't care less what happened to them. Many of them had no drive or determination. From a staff point of view, that was fine. If they were locked up, they weren't creating any problems. The young people were happy to be in their rooms and the staff were happy for them to be in their rooms so it just carried on. If the governor or part of the management team came round, the prison officer would give the wrong numbers or say that a prisoner was too unwell to go to work.

64. Getting accurate information about how many prisoners were out to work was always a problem at Polmont. I remember one occasion when inspectors were at Polmont and they didn't believe our figures. They went round and counted the number of young people in the work parties. They were making a point that they didn't believe our figures and they were quite right. I didn't believe them either. It was a source of acute embarrassment to me. Whatever I said to visitors or inspectors should have been the truth. The inspectors put in their report that there was a problem getting young people out. They didn't like being conned, but we did try to reassure them that we hadn't been trying to con them but found it genuinely difficult to measure the numbers. They did realise that it was difficult. We got different figures from different staff at different times. Getting young people out to work is still a problem in Polmont today.
65. In my early days at Polmont, I was still trying to teach myself and find people who could educate me about young people. I realised very quickly that I knew nothing. We did commission a research project through Stirling University, which tried to find out who our young offenders were. I commissioned it in 1996 or 1997 through Jim Carnie who was head of research at SPS. There was very low educational attainment and literacy. A very high percentage had been in care. I suspect that's still much the same today.

Challenges and changes implemented

Prisoner numbers

66. It is the first part of any officer's job, to count the number of prisoners in their care. They should know how many they are responsible for and be able to quote that number

to any visitor or governor. It was a constant problem at Polmont. We brought in technology that was supposed to locate everybody and measure the numbers, but even the technology didn't work. We gave it up. There were lots of mistakes with numbers, which is absolutely basic. I got really annoyed about it. Managers were always excusing it, saying that someone was late back or blaming the technology.

67. The above relates to activity. There was a different issue regarding hall security where staff were seemingly very casual and complacent. I can remember disciplining an officer because he didn't have his numbers right. I got a lot of complaints from staff about that, saying that I'd singled the officer out and that I was a dictator. It was basic security. If staff were locking people up, they needed to do it properly which meant knowing the numbers. Once I'd disciplined that officer and the staff realised that I meant business, I managed to get the message out and this specific problem disappeared unlike above.

Mealtimes

68. I discovered another problem in the north wing. All of the wings ate meals in association. Forty to sixty people were eating communally so it wasn't the easiest thing to manage. There was one dining hall in the north wing. They used to throw food at each other and staff just allowed them to do it. I asked why it was being allowed and the officers asked what the problem was. I didn't think that it was acceptable. That was difficult because the staff didn't see anything wrong with it. They just saw it as high jinks and didn't understand why I was getting worked up about it. I had to get the message across that it was unacceptable and that I didn't want to see that in any dining hall. That was me being very top-down. Being top-down and directive didn't come easily to me, but I felt that I had to do it. Other changes were much more bottom-up and I was trying to change the culture. I was trying to get a different relationship between the staff and the young people and one based on contemporary standards of behaviour.

Culture and ethos

69. There were two phrases that I kept coming across in my early days at Polmont. They were, "It's only young offenders," and, "It's only Polmont." Those were phrases that I heard from my colleagues in the SPS. Nobody was interested. It was very frustrating. I wanted to replicate what was going on in the adult system, where there was a more relaxed attitude, first names were used and people working together towards personal change. I wanted to forge a collaborative approach with a focus on purposeful activity and not just spending hours behind doors or watching videos. I wanted young offenders to get out and about and to take advantage of the number of training opportunities and reducing offending programmes.
70. We recruited youth workers. My line manager put me in touch with a man who was running Youth Link. He came to visit me and gave me a completely different understanding of youth work. I had thought of youth workers as looking after middle-class children who were very obedient and happy to attend youth clubs. That had been their role and image previously, but they had been told that they had to change to justify their existence by central and local government. They were told that they needed to get out on the streets and that they wouldn't get paid for in effect playing table tennis with nice, polite young people.
71. We had an Apex worker who came in. Apex were an organisation who assisted offenders in finding employment. Both ladies found it to be initially a very hostile environment because staff wouldn't talk to them or engage with them. Staff weren't used to anybody else being in the prison. The pejorative term was 'civies' short for civilians. Some of the staff found this change very difficult. Thankfully the Apex worker was an older lady who took it all in her stride and she actively supported the first and the second youth worker who were very young. There had been teachers coming into Polmont previously, but they stayed in the education unit and didn't go elsewhere. They had no engagement with staff and no engagement in the wings, although I did gradually change that.

72. I was trying to create a more open environment with people coming in from the outside rather than a closed environment operated solely by prison officers. Some staff found that very difficult and very threatening. They also didn't understand why it was happening. Their mindsets could be very narrow. Polmont was an operational prison. The task, from a staff point of view, was to get through the day with the minimum of fuss, the minimum of hassle and no threat to their safety. That was the objective of 95% if not 99% of the residential staff at Polmont. To try and encourage them to do other things was very difficult.
73. One overarching issue in my opinion was terms of address between staff and the young people. I was annoyed with staff insisting on using surnames. I felt that it had to change and that staff should call young people by their first names or their full names, which admittedly would be unweildy. In the course of my second year at Polmont, I spoke to the union and the management team and we planned a comprehensive change. People were saying to my face that they agreed with me but I wasn't convinced. Nobody was opposing me up front and we carefully prepared the ground for the change.
74. 1 March 1997 was going to be the D-Day for change. Staff either had to use the young offender's first name or call them 'mister'. I knew that no officer at Polmont would call a young offender mister. 1 March came and nothing happened. There was no change whatsoever. The next day, I did the orderly room myself. I'd stopped doing that at that time. I threw out every piece of paper that did not have the full name of the offender. The staff were absolutely livid. Most of the cases were thrown out. I went back to my office, ready for the onslaught which duly emerged.
75. I called a management team meeting for 1.30 pm. I told them what I'd done and that I was looking for their support. I said that I hoped that they would support me as it was important, we needed to win and we weren't backing off. I told them that without proper names being used, paperwork should be given back to the officers. Everybody accepted that. My deputy governor was very good and very positive. He went down to the visits room. When the staff started shouting out the names, he was there to make sure that they shouted out full names. We sent out a coordinated message and it

eventually worked, but there was a tremendous amount of resistance. The staff didn't like it at all, but we got there. That was a big change and it was a good one.

76. Staff were eventually getting the message that I meant business and that I was trying to make changes. For the first year, they were just humouring me. They were pretty sure that I'd be moving on in the same way as all of my predecessors had done. They thought that they'd tell me what wonderful ideas I had, ignore them and then wait until I went away to be replaced by someone different. The penny began to drop that I wasn't moving on and that I wanted to stay. A vacancy came up at my band and staff assumed that I would go for it. I stayed at Polmont and gradually my credibility improved. As with a lot of change in a prison, once you've done it, it quickly becomes the norm. People forget the past. There is the odd change where staff will subvert the change but, by and large, it is accepted and then management have another problem to focus on. Management is not going to look back at yesterday's problem unless it re-emerges perhaps in a slightly different form.
77. We were on a direction of travel, but even after eight years in office there were still lots of cultural issues. Not all of my successors bought into my agenda. Cultural change takes ten or twenty years.

Education

78. When I went to Polmont in 1996, they had just started the first contracts for a small number of colleges to deliver education in penal establishments. Those were introduced in 1995, prior to which the local college tended to provide education and there were various local agreements and policies. In the 1990s, there was a big focus on contracts. The first national contract meant that two colleges obtained all the SPS work. There was a big uproar because one of the colleges was based in England with no penal experience, but as it happened, that college did not last very long.
79. In Polmont, the education contract was given to Falkirk College. There were two full-time staff and various part-time staff. I had just come from Greenock Prison, where education had been very important. There was a great set-up in Greenock and I was

very pleased with it. We had expanded education. Initially, I thought the set-up in Polmont was good but I quickly changed my mind. I didn't believe the statistics that I was receiving about the numbers in class. I didn't see any sense of energy, vitality or imagination from the full-time staff.

80. The unit was called the school, which incensed me because some of the young people at Polmont had truanted from school for often the greater parts of their secondary school life. How on earth could we imagine that they would want to go back to school? It seemed to me to be an absolute no-brainer, but that was not the culture. At best, the culture might have been described as paternalistic. At worst, I think that it was self-seeking, very insular and just giving the staff a really easy time.
81. At first, I didn't realise the powers that I had within the contract. I would discuss the matter with my head of services. He kept assuring me that things would improve. With hindsight, I should have moved quicker and formally on the contract. I didn't think that the contract was being implemented. That was the whole point in having a contract rather than the very casual and informal set-up that had been in place pre-contract. I am now very critical of my initial much too timid approach but in my defence, the idea of contract compliance and vigorous application of the contract was still a novel situation.
82. Under the powers of the contract, I had the power to get rid of the contractor if I followed the process. Eventually, we moved the staff. I remember having a de facto education conference at Polmont. I invited my former head of education at Greenock to come through. I realised that it might not work. Nobody would want to be lectured by someone from another prison, telling them what we should do. On the other hand, the head of education at Greenock was very progressive and dynamic. In my estimation, she was a person who enthused others. I was hoping that some of that might rub off on the two full-time staff at Polmont. I was giving them a chance to reinvent education and make it attractive to the young people at Polmont. This did not work and as indicated above they left.

83. It was before computers and IT coming in so the subjects taught were fairly academic. The big issue was literacy and how to teach people who were illiterate. For the most part, young offenders weren't particularly bothered about being illiterate. They didn't see it as a huge obstacle. We had to create a climate whereby young people wanted to come to education. We renamed the education unit and called it a college. I thought that symbols like that were important. Eventually, the two full-time members of staff left. We recruited a lady from Dumfries, who had been working with young offenders there. She was great and on a par with my colleague in Greenock.
84. We did change education in Polmont markedly. I think we could have done more and done what we did better. We could certainly have made the changes quicker. I was always one of the Governors in the vanguard of pushing education. Not every governor saw education as a priority. It depended on the clientele, but with young people it was blindingly obvious that education was a route to a better life and hopefully a law-abiding life. However, it was an uphill struggle convincing young people of the importance of education when their own memories of school were very recent and uniformly bad. They had no role models in their families or extended families. I can remember talking to one or two about going to college. Ten or fifteen years later that might have been more realistic. At that time, talking about college to these kids was like talking about going to the moon. On the one hand, you have to be ambitious but on the other hand you have to be realistic. Literacy is a mammoth problem and it will always be a mammoth problem in prisons. How do you engage people, some of whom don't want to be engaged with, and persuade them that education is the or a way forward?
85. We started a parenting course, which was run by two officers. We received help from the Aberlour Trust. Their then chief executive was very supportive. I gave the two officers carte blanche to go and talk to the voluntary sector. They came back and created and delivered a pioneering programme. They won a lot of awards for it. I don't think we measured its impact, but it seemed a really good thing to do. We were slightly ahead of the game because parenting courses thereafter became very popular and regularly available in other sectors. I think we ran into the practical difficulty of getting wives or partners involved. However, just having a course for one parent was useful

because a lot of young people didn't have a clue. Additionally, a lot of the young men got involved with older women who had children by previous relationships. There was a lot of complexity there.

Social work

86. Social work was complicated in prisons. Social workers tended to be on their own, physically and metaphorically, and governors didn't have a lot of direct involvement with them. That changed because they also went onto a contract and Governors then had a lot more power in terms of that contract. However, the contract was always being challenged and local authorities would refuse to sign it. It became very political.
87. The role of social workers in prison was never properly clarified. There was always some conflict between what they did and what external social workers did. There seemed to be an element of duplication. Were prison social workers carrying out a counselling role and, if so, were they trained for that? Were they doing casework or group work? A lot of Governors had questions about what they were actually doing and it could be quite difficult, if not impossible, to find out.
88. Gradually, we developed a much more multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach and these barriers began to break down. When new build prisons came in, we managed to co-locate a lot of services. Psychology, education and social work could be placed in the same room. Although open plan had become the norm, it was also designed to bring these different disciplines together so that they might talk to each other.

Visits

89. Visiting became very important in the SPS from the 1990s onwards. The results of the first prisoner survey in 1990 took a lot of people aback. Prisoners said that they wanted more and better visits. That was very much taken on board. It was always a bit heart breaking at Polmont because there would always be at least one baby at any visiting session. We wouldn't want to stop that so we did try and design our visiting rooms

better. We always had to strike a balance between conflicting objectives because visits are a primary route for drugs coming into prisons. Equally, we wanted to create an atmosphere, a culture and a context where visits were meaningful. We tried to provide better catering arrangements and a children's play area as well as more and longer visits.

90. England and Northern Ireland were way ahead of Scotland when it came to providing visitor centres. Edinburgh had a relatively long-standing visitor centre and Perth Prison had one for a short time. That was it. SPS only changed its attitude to visitor centres ten years ago with the appointment of a new Chief Officer who had senior experience in the other services. The thinking behind visitor centres is to support families and recognise that visiting a prison can be an ordeal. There might be travelling involved. What services can be provided? What length of visit do families want and what length of visit can be provided? How do we support children of different ages? I should declare an interest here as I have chaired the group that run the visitor centres at Glenochil and Cornton Vale since 2015. It's a very good example of cross-government joined up support. We're primarily funded by community justice, but also by Early Years and Public Health.

Healthcare

91. Health became a big issue in prisons and I really pushed it at Polmont. I hadn't known before I went there, but there was a very high incidence of asthma amongst the prisoner population at Polmont. We started asthma clinics. A lot of the young people were smokers. We were the first prison to start anti-smoking clinics. I can remember some staff asking why we were bothering about smoking when there were so many other issues. My argument was that if someone could change smoking, they could change other things. Even if they just managed to cut back, it was a very powerful and obvious example of personal change. If they could change in that area, they could change in other areas. My all-embracing message was that change was possible. I wouldn't deny that there were a few hardened criminals at Polmont, but the vast majority were not. They were open to change. The challenge was finding a way in.

92. I had a really good healthcare manager. She got her nurses out and about, which was also a change. I also had for a time a really good psychologist, who was the first appointed to come to Polmont. Nationally, we'd adopted a new psychology policy. We were appointing a lot of psychologists to prisons. Most of them were young, female, middle-class and straight out of university. They were a remarkably uniform group. The male appointed to Polmont was completely different. His name was Mark Wilson. He was a mature very experienced professional who had worked for most of his career in local authority and residential settings. He was brilliant and became very well respected by staff which was a bonus for me. He pressed all of my buttons so to speak and gave me the ammunition that I needed to fire. He gave me a lot of the rationale for what I was trying to articulate in my own mind.
93. One of the first points Mark Wilson made to me stayed with me for the rest of my career. He said that we had to create a safe environment and that we could forget any semblance of initiating personal change if a person did not feel safe. It might seem blindingly obvious, but it wasn't at the time with a very casual institutional approach to low level violence. I took that on board. It was incredibly difficult because the only way to keep everybody safe at Polmont was to keep them behind their doors. The more activity, the more the danger of fights and disruption. Balancing those conflicting objectives was difficult.
94. I did inherit one speech and learning therapist at Polmont. I managed to increase her hours. I tried to make that quite an important part of our regime. David Ramsbotham, (later Lord Ramsbotham) Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales from 1995 until 2001, was doing a thematic report on young offenders. Someone told him to come up to Scotland and he came to see me at Polmont. He referred to my interest in speech and learning therapy in his report and later in his book. I felt that speech and learning therapy was very important, along with trying to reduce the stigma attached to that. It's all very well having the resourcing, but you need to have a system to which people can self-refer and has other forms of referral. It's not as straightforward as you might think. There is still quite a lot of stigma surrounding young people and speech impediments.

95. We were also the first prison to have specific mental health nurses. They had a different colour of uniform so they stood out, which was deliberate. Their job was to get out and about and talk to people. They were able to sit down with young people and be seen. Young people could come to them and talk to them. The hope was they could find out if any young person had gone under the radar and was at risk. That became quite useful in terms of changing the culture. Looking back, I think we had a really effective, proactive, multi-disciplinary healthcare team at Polmont, supported by psychiatrists and psychologists.

Suicide prevention strategies

96. Suicide had been a huge issue for me when I was at Greenock. When I went to Polmont, I was still frightened by the phone ringing at 6:30 am. Between 6:30 and 7:00 am was the time when I would be alerted that someone had committed suicide. For a long time, I lived with that fear of the phone ringing at that time. When I went to Polmont, suicide and its prevention was a big issue for me. There were clearly risks when it came to young people.
97. There had been a number of suicides at Barlinnie in the 1980s. That led to the then governor of Barlinnie trying to develop a policy for Barlinnie. It was rolled out into a national policy in the early-1990s. There were also a number of suicides at Cornton Vale so there was a need for a national policy. This was duly devised and it has been revised and updated over time. It should always be dynamic and prison authorities need to learn from experience. There was a national group set up which tried to draw lessons from individual cases and include them in any policy reviews. They had a relative of someone who had died in custody on that group to make it more transparent and externally focussed.
98. The problem with the national policy was implementing it. It was all very well having a policy, but implementing it was another matter. There was a lot of pushback from staff because they felt that they were being held responsible. We started going into case conference mode about young people, which could be called by anybody who held concerns about them. We were really relying on prison officers. We had different

attempts at personal officer schemes, whereby one officer would have responsibility for a number of prisoners. There was an interesting piece of research carried out about ten years ago which highlighted the number of bereavements that young people in Polmont had encountered. Bereavements could raise a flag that a young person might be at risk.

99. When we changed the policy about suicide prevention, it became about holding meetings and getting teams together. Staff would come along and the young person himself might be present. Gradually, the staff were won over. It was a team effort, but we put a great deal of work into the prevention of suicide at Polmont. I think we succeeded. Over the eight years that I was at Polmont, my recollection is that we had two suicides and one person who ended up with brain damage following a suicide attempt. That is two or three too many.
100. The Roman Catholic chaplain at Polmont, Father Brian, was extremely good. He was also very much part of the team approach to preventing suicide, as it evolved at Polmont. He saw it as his mission to help the very troubled young men. He was a great help. Brian would often attend the case conference meetings. Sometimes, young people would talk to the chaplain in a way that they wouldn't talk to staff or managers. Not all of the chaplains got involved in that kind of thing, but Brian stood out and was exceptional in that regard.
101. Part of the strategy was trying to identify any risk factors from the beginning. When young people came into Polmont, there was no specific screening of prisoners for any mental health problems that might arise. The prevention of suicide policy meant that officers did a checklist with the young person in the reception. The nurse would also see admissions. We did have a problem in that we received lots of admissions at the one time. Sometimes, these things could be a bit rushed. I always thought that the reception process was very important.
102. Passing on of information was poor and possibly still is poor. In those days, it just wasn't done. A young person would be interviewed coming into Polmont and the officer or nurse would know nothing about him. All they had was the warrant. There would be

no information from the Procurator Fiscal or the defence lawyer. If a social enquiry report had been prepared, it might be there but equally it might not be. There was no information from the sentencing court. Exceptionally, there might be some verbal information passed on. On the odd occasion, a lawyer or family member might phone the prison to express concern about someone. At some point, we brought phones into reception so that people could phone their family and let them know they were in Polmont. Generally, the starting point was that we assumed we knew nothing about the background of an individual coming into Polmont.

103. The post of reception officer was later downgraded when staff roles were split in 1995. At that time, we had warned that we would be open to competition from the private sector. The Secretary of State at the time said that he would be satisfied if SPS could cut its costs by 10%. One result from the Staffing Structure Review was the officer role would be split between residential and operational officers. Operational officers had primarily non-contact roles. It was a way of saving money. Efforts were made to change other roles to operational so save more money, such as nightshift officers. It was decided that reception should be moved from residential to operational. I opposed that because I thought that reception officers were very important. They are the first officers that a prisoner will meet and I thought they should be good officers creating a good impression. The message was that reception was not important, but I didn't agree with that. It's a really difficult job because you don't know who is coming off the bus.
104. In terms of changing culture, I thought the attitude of prisoners to their peers was really important. What we did, to varying degrees, was to go through the prevention of suicide policy as part of the induction of prisoners. It was incredibly difficult, but we tried to get over that it wasn't grassing on a prisoner to tell staff that you are worried about someone, your neighbour or your cellmate. We would tell them that it didn't matter who they told, a nurse or an officer or a manager or whoever they saw. If they had any concerns about a fellow prisoner, we wanted them to tell us. It was a message included in induction programmes. I tried to do that personally when I was Governor of Edinburgh and Glenochil. I tried to encourage prisoners to take responsibility for the welfare of their fellow prisoners. It used to spark off a worthwhile discussion, but I

would not underestimate how difficult a lot of prisoners found that message. It was not a message that they liked or wanted to hear.

105. If a young person was identified as being at risk of suicide, it would be documented. There were forms that had to be completed. People would take actions following upon the meeting. I would only see the forms if I was particularly interested in something or needed to know more about someone's background, for example if I received letters from family or a local MP or MSP. Segregation cells were used. They were always a great crisis of conscience. To keep someone alive, they were put into extreme conditions. It didn't look or feel right. Very occasionally, we had to go for that option. I always had a suspicion that staff resorted to that too quickly.
106. Every segregation unit had an isolation cell, which had virtually nothing in it. Its use would be strictly monitored and recorded. The doctor or nurse would visit daily and there were checks within the system. Occasionally, there would be someone who was self-harming for the purposes of attention seeking rather than suicide. It was rare, but there were individuals who would behave in an extremely difficult way. The policy was to try and prevent people from becoming extreme. I worked on the basis that if we managed people properly, they wouldn't become extreme cases. However, some people had psychiatric conditions. It was very rare for a young person to be transferred from Polmont to a psychiatric facility. I can't remember any occasions when that happened at Polmont.
107. One of the objectives of the team approach was to reduce the frequency of segregation for suicide prevention. I would like to think that it did, but there were exceptions. There was one senior nurse manager based at HQs who challenged me and other Governors about the practice and asserted that it wasn't as good as we wanted it to be. That was a constant challenge, whether policy was being practiced consistently. If you took your eye off a particular ball in a prison, it would come back to haunt you. The skill of being a good governor was that you had to keep your eye on everything, which is well-nigh impossible.

Deaths in Polmont

108. Any death in prison becomes a police matter. Thereafter, it is referred to the Procurator Fiscal and they have to hold a Fatal Accident Inquiry. The body would be removed from the prison very quickly and taken to the morgue. Immediately after a death in Polmont, the family would be informed by the police. I would then follow up and try and make contact with the family as soon as possible. My next steps would be based on what they wanted. Sometimes, they didn't know what they wanted or they didn't want anything. I learned at Greenock to bend over backwards to be helpful and accessible to the family. My strategy was to try and find somebody in the staff who knew the prisoner and could convince the family that their loved one wasn't just a number. I wanted them to know that someone knew him and someone cared for him. That was the approach that I took at Polmont. Over the years, the family was my number one focus for as long as they wanted it to be. I would drop everything if a family member wanted to see me.
109. When it came to providing support for other inmates after a death, we became more sensitive to that as our knowledge expanded. Initially, support like that would probably have been given by the chaplain. He would normally be visible and accessible. Copycat suicides became part of our framework of understanding from the early 1990s. Prevention of copycat behaviours and identification of those in danger of them became a big issue. We would check our records and review people who were at risk. We ran the risk of upsetting someone who was settled and didn't want to be checked out. It was difficult to find a balance. There were so many different factors involved.

South wing

110. South wing was for more vulnerable young people. There was a different atmosphere there than in the rest of Polmont. The staff were more supportive and accommodating. They were less punitive. They didn't put prisoners on report at the drop of a hat. We didn't get many cases in the orderly room from south wing. The staff were able to absorb a lot of behaviours there.

111. We started getting one or two sex offenders at Polmont. As sex offenders grew in numbers and importance, the national policy was to treat them separately. Peterhead became the prison for sex offenders. I was under pressure to separate them at Polmont. I felt that they were okay in the vulnerable unit. I'm not seeking to minimise it, but their sexual offending wasn't at the most severe end of the scale. I felt that the major objective was not to make it worse and to try and normalise them rather than concentrate on what may have been one act in their whole short lives. I followed that approach, but with a lot of trepidation. I wasn't sure that I was right. It seemed to me to be the right approach, but you could equally make a case that other young, vulnerable prisoners might be led astray by the sex offenders. Headquarters allowed me to do my own thing and nobody interfered. At the time, I thought that approach worked and on balance I think it was the better option.

Under sixteens in Polmont/unruly certificates

112. Occasionally, we housed under sixteens. It was usually for days, occasionally weeks. Those under sixteen could be given what were called 'unruly certificates', which was an excuse to put a problematic youngster, usually male, into a prison. I think the certificates were issued by a Sheriff. They were based on evidence that the child was difficult to handle and that there was no alternative place. It was pretty rare by the mid-1990s and it was getting rarer. All prisons could conceivably receive these young prisoners. I remember getting them in Perth very occasionally. I have no evidence for this, but I think people thought that by putting these youngsters into a prison there would suddenly be a miraculous cure and they would change their way of life and their way of thinking.

113. Under sixteen prisoners were always held in what used to be known as the hospital wing so that there was no 'contamination' with the other prisoners. I remember one strange period over Christmas and New Year when a number of these prisoners came in. I think it was around 2001- 2002. We had something like six or seven of them, which was unprecedented. I was really worried. My first concern was self-harm. We were struggling to cope with that number and had to make alternative accommodation arrangements. We located them together in a different part of the prison. I was in close

contact with the health centre manager because I thought we needed to be very careful with this group.

114. I remember writing to my chief executive to alert him, copying my line manager in. I told him that I'd just received this number of under sixteen year olds, that I was quite concerned about it and that there were clearly risks associated with them being in Polmont. I wasn't asking him to do anything about it. I was just alerting him so that if something happened, he couldn't say that he didn't know. I was raising the fact that it was strange, unusual and potentially risky for SPS. My email was sent around various people within what was then the Scottish Executive. There was no offer of help and I hadn't asked for anything. I just thought it might get into the media or, worse still, we could have self-harming. Some people commented and then it came back to me. One civil servant made a comment that I took great exception to. She had written something like, "Tell the governor to manage."
115. The group of under sixteens gradually dispersed and there weren't any issues, but the issue of the unruly certificate always upset and annoyed me. I didn't like that group of prisoners coming into Polmont. There was nothing that I could do for them, nothing that I could provide by way of treatment or training. All I was doing was housing them. Some of them came across as confident, know-it-all teenagers, but if you went beyond that façade, it must have been quite a difficult and challenging experience for some of them, if not all of them. It was eventually done away with.
116. When I was at Polmont, I would get letters from social workers asking to bring young people in, so that they could see what life was like in prison and never trouble them again. To me, that was just nonsense but credible professional people believed that. I resisted social workers when they wanted to do that. The only time I would allow social workers to visit on the basis of deterrence was if they spoke to prisoners. I would insist that they sat down and actually talked to, listened to and engaged with the prisoners. It was never a problem for me to find prisoners who were willing to talk to youngsters. The idea that you come in through the gates and hear the gates shutting behind you, see cells everywhere and it's a game changing experience and you never get into

trouble again in your life is, in my view, not realistic. Time and time again I came across people with professional qualifications and experience who believed that.

Under 18s

117. When I was governor of Polmont, there were massive cultural changes at a number of levels all happening simultaneously. I was also helped in that C wing was refurbished and handed over to me. I inherited no plan for what to do with it so it was a completely blank page. I used it for under 18s who were first offenders. I ran it differently to the other units. Again, just by chance, a line manager was transferred from Peterhead. I'd met him when I visited Peterhead in another capacity. They had opened a unit for difficult prisoners there. He wanted a transfer to Polmont so I said I'd take him. As soon as he arrived, I asked him to be the manager of the new unit and run it in the same way as the unit in Peterhead. I told him that he could refuse the offer if he wanted to, but he accepted it willingly. He was one of three managers there.
118. I wanted to replicate the unit in Peterhead so it was about prisoners and staff sitting down and talking. Staff, all volunteers, came out of standard uniform choosing instead the Physical Instructor Uniform (t-shirt and jogging bottoms). There was a much better atmosphere. There was no work. If the prisoners wanted work, it would have to be designed for them. Various people helped to grow the regime, including a psychologist, educationalist and drama teacher.
119. It housed about eighteen young people. The overriding aim was to help this group of young people and hopefully prevent them from becoming tarnished by mixing with older prisoners. I was also setting out my stall that it was how I wanted all of Polmont to operate. I wanted the good practice in that unit to be replicated in the other units. Eventually, I wanted staff to move in and out of other units so they could see that it was working and that it was also a better working experience.
120. The unit was a success. I did expect a national policy change for managing under 18s but this did not materialise. I became increasingly well-versed in the wider politics proposing legal changes. There had been a lot of big changes in the 1990s with the

arrival of devolution and the European Convention on Human Rights. I thought that we would no longer receive prisoners under the age of 18, so I thought I'd start with that unit. I was expecting a formal change in the law, but it didn't happen. Eventually, I rolled out a separate Unit for all under 18s. It was a way of treating under 18s differently. I had thought that we would stop locking up people under the age of 18.

121. I thought that there was a lot of mileage in investing in young people. There were very few hardened criminals amongst them, maybe one or two who terrorised their local communities with crime and disorder. I felt that there was an opportunity to engage meaningfully with a lot of them and to try and convince them that there was a future for them without crime and antisocial behaviour.

Transfer of young people from secure units

122. I had great concerns about the transfer of young people from Secure Units to Polmont, but it got me nowhere. It really annoyed me when I got a phone call from someone at St. Andrew's House, more or less telling me to take someone from a Secure Unit. Generally, these boys were sixteen but occasionally they were fifteen years old. They came from Rossie Farm in Montrose, Geilsland School and Kerelaw, which were in Ayrshire, and St. Mary's in Bishopbriggs. They never had any records transferred with them. I thought this emergency transfer was a terrible indictment on the Secure Units, given their vast resources.
123. The numbers concerned were very small, but I was very critical of the system and I thought that it could be managed much better. The extreme cases were when we were told that an individual was unmanageable within a secure unit. We were seen as the last resort. I would try and check that we were the last resort. I would ask the person at St. Andrew's House if they'd tried other secure units. The person I was talking to wasn't the decision maker and was just passing on information. In those days, the units didn't talk to each other, hold formal meetings or share good practice. They didn't share anything. They were very regionally based but they took children from all over Scotland.

124. I remember going to visit St. Mary's after it had just been completely refurbished. It looked really good and had a high standard of accommodation. It had a very caring principal and deputy principal. I was talking to the head of education there. He was telling me about someone who had behaved badly and they had really had a go at him. I don't know whether it was physical or not, but I was quite taken aback by the reaction. Afterwards, I wondered whether that had been right and whether I should have spoken to the principal. I often wish that I had. I feel that I copped out there. I'm sure that the head of education wasn't quoting policy.
125. Eventually, we set up a quarterly meeting between Polmont, Cornton Vale and the secure units. Part of my objective with that meeting was to highlight children who might be coming to Polmont. Sometimes, they came to Polmont as part of natural progression. It was very arbitrary as to when they were transferred to the prison service. They could be sixteen, seventeen, eighteen years old. If they were coming to Polmont, I wanted it to be planned rather than overnight. I can't point to any success stories. Occasionally, one of my unit managers would go and speak to a young person at a secure unit before transfer.

Staff recruitment and training

126. SPS staff were recruited centrally. They were distributed according to two criterion. Firstly, which prison had vacancies and secondly which prison was closest to the employee's home. Staff coming to Polmont didn't necessarily come because they wanted to work with young people. When the young offender's complex at Glenochil closed, some staff came to Polmont. They were a very mixed group. Some staff had the necessary skills for dealing with young people and some didn't.
127. Over the years I spent at Polmont, I gradually put together a really good management team. It was good in the sense that we were all singing from the same hymn sheet and everybody was on board. Time and again, the question came up as to what different skills does an officer at Polmont need in comparison to an officer at Edinburgh or Glenochil. Intuitively, we thought that there were different skills but we could never

articulate, define them or measure them. I came back to the issue many times. I looked at England and tried to see what they were doing but I never came up with anything.

128. My team came round to the view that it wasn't about different skills. It was more about whether the officer was interested in young people. That was what made the difference between a good officer and a bad officer. We focused on trying to get staff who really wanted to be at Polmont. Equally, we tried to move on staff who didn't want to be there and people who I thought were behaving inappropriately.

129. I was impressed by a manager of south wing, Scott. South wing was for vulnerable detainees. Scott later became the staff training officer. He found an organisation called the 'Study for Adolescence'. They offered training for staff in managing adolescents. It opened up a real avenue for us to promote change. We really adopted it with great gusto. We wanted to convey to staff that they were managing adolescents and adolescence was one of the big issues in the life cycle. It was a soft and non-threatening way of engaging with the staff. We would explain to them that they were dealing with young people who were going through a major change in their lives. We bought in the Study for Adolescence one day course to be delivered locally.

130. Scott then took over the training. Initially, he had some really dreadful experiences. Some of the staff didn't take it at all and didn't take it from him. He showed incredible resilience and he persevered and worked through all the staff. It didn't impact on some of the staff, but it was another step along the way. It was about giving them a different perspective, enabling staff to see young people as potentially troubled and going through a difficult time. It was about getting them to think about their own children who might go through adolescence at some point or their neighbour's children or relatives and reminding them that these were skills that could help them outside their jobs. I think that was a message that struck home with a lot of people.

131. The number of staff varied, but I think it was about 350 to 400. It was never static for any length of time. I didn't really think that we had an issue with staff bullying young people, but I did have concerns about the manner and professionalism about individual officers. I would talk to their line managers who agreed with me but would find it difficult

to challenge them. Having more female staff helped change the culture. Not all female staff were good, but most were. They were probably outnumbered by about twenty to one. They were battling a very strong male culture. We were getting rumblings that things were not as they should be so we surveyed female staff. We got really good information back. They told us that they felt uncomfortable because of the way that staff assembled at the gate at the start and end of a shift. We tried to stagger the halls getting to the gate. We gave unit managers discretion about letting staff away early. We tried to reduce the numbers in quite a small area.

Assaults and violence reduction

132. My line manager was not unsympathetic but told me that the violence figures at Polmont were too high. When the SPS became an executive agency in 1992, we were given numerous targets. We started measuring things that had never been measured before, one of them being assaults. Polmont was contributing a huge number of assaults to the SPS figures. My line manager told me that one of my jobs was to get that number down. I said if I did that, I'd have to lock everybody up, but I accepted that as my challenge and I had to deal with it. The figures did come down.
133. I tried to get through to staff that violence was not inevitable and that they could predict and anticipate it. There were triggers. Where staff were placed on the route when prisoners were moving was important. What staff did and what they were encouraged to do when they did see trouble was also important. Generally, the staff were good. They needed to be empowered to use their judgement. They needed their mindset to change and know that they would be supported if they did something positive and for the right reason. If they cut corners and they didn't do their job then 'hell mend them', but if they were acting for the right motive, they needed to know that they would be backed. I had to get that message over.
134. Bullying was something that I was concerned about when I was governor of Polmont. The biggest issue at the time was what I used to call tribalism, which was east versus west, Glasgow versus Edinburgh, everybody versus Fife and so on. That was my principal concern in terms of good order. One example was north wing, had a

reputation for being a Glasgow wing. Anybody who wasn't from Glasgow was at a significant disadvantage. Whether you call that bullying or gang control, territorialism was rife and very hard to combat. We did have a minor incident once because the balance of power changed in north wing. There was a local public holiday which meant that a lot of Glaswegians were released. The other prisoners saw it as a chance to put the Glaswegians under their control. When we investigated it, we realised it was a result of the change in the population of the wing because of the public holiday. We were always alert to it, but it was very difficult.

135. I sat in on a class that one of my youth workers took with newly arrived young people. I can remember it as if it was yesterday. She had a group of about twelve to sixteen young people sitting in a semi-circle. She went around the group and asked them to introduce themselves and say where they were from. Most of them came from Glasgow. She split them up into two groups and asked them to think of the three best things in their community and the three worst things in their community. They all came up with the same thing. She used that as a way in to say that they had more in common than they had differences. She asked them to look at what more they had in common and realise that just because someone is from Edinburgh it doesn't mean that they can't talk to someone from Glasgow. I thought that was brilliant.
136. There was a lot of low-level fighting. Some young people would create homemade weapons. We had a metal fabrication shop in the prison and young people were always smuggling stuff out of there and creating weapons. I can't remember any young people requiring hospital treatment because of assaults by other prisoners, but I'm sure that must have happened. In adult prisons, if there was a real fight there would also be a victim. They would often use weapons that had been smuggled in. The young people didn't have weapons or, if they did, they were home-made. A lot of the violence was impetuous.
137. I do remember two young people from the same street in Greenock. They hated each other and one of them went for the other. Our intelligence hadn't picked up on that. One of our strategies was strategies for violence reduction as it became known. A benefit of having so many residential units at Polmont was that we could move people

around fairly easily. We could anticipate problems and split people up. It needed good intelligence from staff or police, but the police were very reluctant to share intelligence.

Discipline

138. Another observation I made when I arrived at Polmont was that staff were very punitive. Young people were put on report constantly and for what I considered very minor matters, such as disobedience or refusal to go to work. There was a lot of low-level violence. It was unplanned and spontaneous. One of the things I noticed about young prisoners was that they were very tactile compared to adult prisoners.
139. A big feature of any prison is movement. Prisoners have to be moved from place A to place B. It's done at a certain time in a certain way and everybody knows the routine. There used to be marching in silence, but that had long since gone. It was pretty informal and every prison did it slightly differently. It had to be done safely, properly and efficiently. It's a key part of the prison day and the whole routine of the jail depends upon it. If the movement slips or is incomplete, everything gets put back. When prisoners started getting methadone, that dominated the prison day for example in Edinburgh, but drugs weren't an issue at Polmont.
140. Whereas adults moved reasonably appropriately from A to B, young prisoners were always jostling and pushing each other. Nine times out of ten it was perfectly harmless and good natured. Every now and again, someone would push back and suddenly it would flare up. It might calm down just as quickly as it blew up. There may or may not be an officer in the vicinity. If there was an officer present, what does he or she do when he or she sees that? Does the officer intervene or leave it to run its course? There were skills involved in that. The officer involved has an immense amount of discretion. It might get more serious if he or she doesn't intervene. The officer might get hurt if he or she intervenes. If the officer shouts, he or she will question whether the prisoner is going to obey him or her. If they don't, it's a loss of face for the officer. There are lots of interesting dilemmas for an officer watching people en route from A to B. Good staff will make sure nothing happens. Poor staff will either opt out and look the other way or intervene and make a potentially bad situation worse.

141. Often, I would refer cases of violence between young people to the police but the police didn't want to know. If the police came in at all they were in and out. The young people wouldn't speak to the police. I knew that young people wouldn't speak to the police and the police knew that. I didn't want to waste police time, but it was all part of setting the scene that we would not be frightened of bringing the police in as and when. I did speak to the superintendent of the police a couple of times to explain that and he seemed to understand. I would also refer any cases involving drugs being found on a prisoner to the police.
142. If a prisoner was put on report, he would be taken before the governor. The expectation was that the governor would adjudicate in the orderly room. There was no presumption of innocence. There was an assumption of guilt and that the governor was going to impose a punishment. At that time, prisoners could be locked up for up to fourteen days, earnings could be taken off them and they could be taken off recreation for a number of days. They might also have their Prisoner's Private Cash (PPC) stopped.
143. During my time at Polmont, we did move to a much more in-depth assessment of the charge, which was at times adversarial. I was very clear that the primary purpose of the orderly room was to stop it happening again and wasn't necessarily about punishment. I think all of the managers who did the orderly room were also clear about that. My objective was to reduce the chance of it happening again. I encouraged managers to use deferred sentences. For example, you would tell the young person that if they weren't back in the orderly room in the next fortnight, they would receive no punishment. If they were back again, you would tell them what the punishment would be, along with the punishment for any new offence. We were trying to encourage prisoners to think and learn that actions had consequences. One of the first programmes that we ran was called 'Rehabilitation and Reasoning'. It was so basic, but it was to encourage the young people to think about the consequences of their actions and to think before they acted. For a lot of young people, they just didn't think like that. They just did whatever came into their head at the time.
144. I think restraint was used less and less at Polmont over the years. The numbers in the segregation unit dropped quite dramatically. It could hold about eight prisoners. Time

in the segregation unit could be an orderly room decision. Young Offenders could be placed in segregation because of bullying or if it was felt that they were exercising too much control over other prisoners. When I went to Polmont, it was always full. Gradually, we got the numbers down. One day, there was nobody in it. That didn't last very long, but we did reduce the numbers significantly. Laterally, the young men in the segregation unit were very troubled. I think at times we didn't manage really difficult young people very well. There were a few over the years who were in the segregation unit for too long. We struggled to manage them and they worried me, as mentioned in paragraphs 159 to 160.

145. The regime in the segregation unit was very limited and prisoners were locked up most of the time. We did try and put some PE equipment into one part of the unit. The inmates were always allowed visits either in the visit room or exceptionally in the unit. We changed the education contractor and got a much better service from the education team. Their staff were willing to go into the unit and see what they could do. I can remember one officer teaching a particularly troubled young man fly fishing in the segregation unit. The officer took a lot of stick for doing that, but he was very kind and courageous. He came up with the idea and asked for authority to do it. He taught the young person how to do it within the unit. He was one of my best officers. He also started a parenting course along with another officer in 2000-2001. His fly fishing featured in a BBC documentary series.

Investigations into staff misconduct/complaints

146. Some staff were much more assertive with young people than they would have been with adults. They felt that they could bully young people. I'm sure that some saw the job in terms of them being agents of control. They could exercise that control over young people who couldn't speak back. If they did, nobody would listen to them or believe them so they were quite safe. There were a number of staff like that. I found it very difficult and I had no panacea.
147. One of the things that I could do was ensure that every allegation of inappropriate behaviour by an officer was investigated. Nine times out of ten, the investigation led

nowhere. The investigation would usually be led by a manager from another hall. If the allegation was very serious, I would get a manager in from another prison. I can't think of an occasion when an allegation involving violence by a prison officer was referred to the police, but it was about sending out a message that whatever had gone on in the past was not going to go on in the future. Any example of inappropriate behaviour that came to my attention would be investigated formally.

148. One recurring issue was two young offenders fighting and how they might be moved to the punishment unit. Do they go of their own accord or do they have to be three-man teamed to the segregation unit? I was always nervous that the staff would use a three-man team as a first option rather than a last option. That option should only have been used if the young man was not going willingly. Afterwards, the detainee would often tell me that he would have gone willingly. That was after the event and staff had to make a judgement call at the time. It was a recurring complaint and it was a worry.
149. It was very rare for a young offender to be violent towards an officer, but I did worry about what the response might be. There were a few cases which did concern me. Later on in my career, we had CCTV which helped a lot. I do recall two officers who I had under investigation in relation to their behaviour towards inmates. Evidence was the problem. I moved one of the officers to a new post, exceptionally, but he actually resigned and didn't move to the adult prison. That made me suspicious that he knew he couldn't cope in an adult prison.
150. Quite late on in my time in Polmont, I did come across a case when we thought that one or possibly two officers were using a prisoner to manage the other prisoners. I had never come across that before. It was very difficult to get any evidence. It was all suspicion and innuendos. There was a weak manager who threw his hands up and didn't want to manage. That was quite often a wider issue at Polmont, that staff managed the mangers rather than managers managing the staff. All we could do was break it up and move everybody. It was certainly a warning shot to me because I didn't think that this could occur. I was really shocked, horrified and dismayed that it could happen on my watch. There was quite a lot of circumstantial evidence around it. I

worried that if it had happened once, it could happen elsewhere. On the other hand, the system had worked in bringing the matter to the attention of management.

151. The worst case that I had involved an officer in A wing, which wasn't his usual wing. I think he was throwing his weight about a bit. One of the young offenders threw some food at him, which hit him on the back of his head. He claimed that he knew who had done this, despite him having had his back to the culprit. Later on, he went to that young offender's cell. Another officer was complicit in taking out the other prisoner in the cell. We don't know what he did, but the fear was that he meted out his own discipline. I investigated the incident and suspended the officer, but I didn't have enough evidence to proceed further. The young person involved in the incident had been on remand and had been released. I'm not sure how the incident came to my attention, but I think another member of staff must have told me about it.
152. The member of staff involved in that incident was a very difficult member of staff and I had a lot of run-ins with him. He was not straightforward. He had good qualities. He was the coach who took the football team and was running up and down the touchline, shouting to and encouraging the young people. We were in a local league and we were developing a good football team.
153. My approach was to always be seen to investigate, even in the knowledge that the chance of something coming out of the investigation was minimal. Some young people were not reliable witnesses. They would say one thing one day and a different thing another. They would say different things to different people. On the one hand, I had to say and stress to staff and investigating officers that just because someone is a prisoner it does not mean that they are not telling the truth. The danger was that a lot of staff thought that prisoners were at it. On the other hand, you had some very erratic young men who would say different things at different times to different people for different reasons. You just had to come to some sort of judgement.
154. We moved to a different Code of Conduct, which was introduced nationally across the SPS. I can't remember when that happened, but it made my job slightly easier. We had a full-time union representative, who was quite a mercurial individual. Sometimes

he was very helpful and at other times he was extremely unhelpful. I think that's just the nature of the post. I learned over time that if I could get him on board, which often meant a one-to-one with him, then he might play ball. He did come back to me once to say that I was investigating at too high a level. The code stipulated that there were different levels for investigations. I didn't think that I was, but I told him that I usually spoke about possible cases with one or two of my managers. I invited him to come into that meeting so that he could hear what was being said. I told him that he could observe or contribute if he wished. He started sitting on the meetings and that particular criticism disappeared.

155. The big issue we still had with these investigations was evidence. You need some sort of evidence. Part of the new prisoner complaints procedure was that any prisoner could fill in the form and send it straight to the Governor in a sealed envelope. I think that was introduced in the late 1990s. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was also coming in so there was much more focus on rights. We did a lot of training with staff on ECHR and they were getting the message.
156. The orderly room had also changed dramatically. Punishments available to the adjudicator were much reduced. There was a message going out to staff, even those staff who were turning a blind eye couldn't keep turning a blind eye. The direction of travel was pretty obvious. They couldn't rely on their uniform for their authority that was the essence of it. The uniform was not the be all and end all of what and who they were. That was difficult for some staff.
157. The danger was that if you changed the procedure in the orderly room and made it more like a court, including if punishments became more flexible and lower tier, some staff would not go through that system and would exercise their own punishment. I was frightened of a back door punishment route. That was a constant worry to me.

Visiting committees and inspections

158. I did have the support of a really good Visiting Committee at Polmont. It was made up of volunteers. They were all people who wanted to be there directly appointed

technically by the Secretary of State. They were very keen and they wanted to be involved and to make a difference. It was a slightly different system for establishments that housed under 21s whereby members of the visiting committees were all secretary of state appointments. Members of visiting committees for adult prisons were appointed by Local Authorities. They were usually councillors, although they didn't have to be. Cornton Vale therefore had two visiting committees, one for under 21s and one for adults.

159. Some Governors kept Visiting Committees at as far a distance as possible. I was quite the reverse. I enjoyed Visiting Committees for the most part. There were some on the committees for adult prisons who attended rarely or briefly and contributed next to nothing. They turned up for their expenses, had a cup of coffee in the governor's office and went home. At Polmont, without fail the visiting committee was filled with enthusiastic, able and professional people. Throughout my time, it had a very dynamic chair in Lady Cullen. She liked the fact that I always made time for her and attended their monthly meetings. I made that a priority. The visiting committee members were able to go anywhere in the prison and talk to the young offenders.
160. Lady Cullen saw it as her mission to visit the segregation unit. She went there every time she was in Polmont without fail. If she saw anything that she thought was inappropriate or not right, she would be at my door five minutes later. Although we got on well, she never allowed our friendship to get in the way of doing her job. She was very quick to follow up anything of note and that set the tone for the whole visiting committee. It maybe got a bit out of hand because they were all trying to outdo each other and find things that they could complain to me about. That was fine because that was the system working and working well.
161. On the morning of the visiting committee monthly meeting, I used to ask the management team if there was anything that anybody was going to tell me at the visiting committee that they knew and that I didn't know. I told them that I'd be very unhappy if they told me something that I didn't know that the management team was aware of. The visiting committee system had its critics, but in my opinion it worked well

for the under 21s. They did their job. The Visiting Committees were replaced around 2012-13.

162. The Prisons Inspectorate did carry out an inspection just before I left Polmont. There must have been one before that because they were carried out every three or four years. They spoke to prisoners and staff. All chief inspectors made a big effort to speak to as many people as they could. The Inspectorate never got involved in individual complaints. They were looking at practice in general. Occasionally, they might come across someone with a story to tell. They would advise the individual of the complaint routes to follow.
163. There would be a massive amount of feedback after an inspection. If they raised matters that the governor had control over then their recommendations should have been accepted and where possible implemented. I would say that their recommendations were implemented at Polmont. I would always take the view that it looked bad if you didn't do so. It appeared insular, arrogant and even insensitive. I never wanted to be any of these things, but that's for other people to judge. Generally, I tried to welcome any external assessment about what we were doing in the prison. My view was that I always encouraged more people coming in from the outside, not just walking around but talking to people and contributing. I wanted people to come in and work with the young people or carry out staff training.
164. Individual prisoners could speak to the inspectorate on a one-to-one basis, but I think that would be unusual. They tried to speak to groups of prisoners or groups of staff. Prisoners would accuse us of picking the prisoners and staff. I certainly didn't do that and I wouldn't want to do that. A lot of staff didn't want to come forward. We tended to put staff forward who were better ambassadors for the service and more keen and open to talking about what they were doing. There were staff who would say that they were only there for the day. That used to really annoy me. It was code for saying, "Don't ask me anything else." Staff like that would never put themselves forward for anything.

165. As far as prisoners putting themselves forward to speak to inspectors, it probably varied from hall to hall and jail to jail. Sometimes we would ask for volunteers or a notice would be put up. Prisoners often don't read notice boards, but we tried to be very open.
166. One of the issues for young people at Polmont was that they were very reluctant to complain. Jim McManus was the first Complaints Commissioner for SPS in the 1990s. There were two further Complaints Commissioners for the Prison Service before we became part of the Ombudsman's work and role. Jim was one of our greatest critics but he was always well-intentioned. He would tell some terrible stories about how disinterested Governors were in the seventies and eighties. He was focused on human rights and later became a distinguished member of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture set up under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

Record-keeping

167. There weren't very many records kept at Polmont. We were becoming more bureaucratic and I was issuing more orders and directives. We had a monthly team brief. There would be some prisoner medical records and some records kept in the hall. We would have kept records of visitors, but I'm not sure whether they were retained for any length of time.
168. We kept an orderly room punishment book. There would be a clerk in the orderly room. He or she would write the prisoner's name and number, the charge and the outcome in the punishment book. We then moved on to an individual paper system. The officer had to fill in lots of detail about the charge. It was a four-page document. The staff didn't like doing it, but they had no choice and they had to get used to it. The punishment books were retained and should be with the National Records Office, but I was never involved in that process.
169. I do remember getting a talk from someone at the Records Office at a Governors in charge meeting. They were encouraging us to keep our records and not to throw anything away. They said that there were always people interested in accessing

records. The Governors all nodded knowledgably, but they went back to their establishments and I don't think they changed a thing. Occasionally, you would get a letter from a relative of a prisoner from thirty, forty years ago requesting any records about him. We didn't have any such records.

170. The new halls changed a lot of working practices. Before then, there were lots of books kept in offices. A lot of people would start a new book to record something. If you looked in these offices, there were a lot of books that had been started but never continued. Nobody would throw anything out. Once the new halls came along, the old halls were demolished and I suspect a lot of books were thrown out. The first of the new generation of house blocks was built in Polmont and opened January 2003.

Leaving Polmont

171. Arrangements for people leaving Polmont were not my direct responsibility. It was occasionally a source of tension. Occasionally, I might get involved in after-care but that was exceptional. There was laterally a plethora of agencies coming into Polmont, which was, I thought, one of our success stories. There was a new director at SPS headquarters who alas was very critical of the numbers coming in to Polmont. She put me under pressure to change tack, but as far as I was concerned the more the merrier. If you talked to some of the young people, they would eventually complain that every agency did the same thing with them. They would come in and interview them and they had to go over the same history. I think that's sadly still an issue.
172. We had a very good manager who supervised that area of outreach. We had regular open days when agencies could come in and compare notes. What was important was that they were coming in and helping the young adults plan for release. If these agencies got to know young people in custody, there was a chance that they could support them when they came out. They could agree places and times to meet. Our responsibility finished when the young person went out the door. When the Community Justice Agencies were set up in 2006 that was meant to be their priority. There is lots of evidence that the critical time in reoffending is immediately after release. We've

known that for years. There have been a number of programmes in place to handle that period, but I don't know whether any of them have been a success.

Leaving Polmont and legacy

173. When I think of my eight years at Polmont, there were some plusses and some minuses. There were some big steps forward and some disappointments. It was always interesting and I really enjoyed my time at Polmont. I found it incredibly stimulating and challenging. If I'd been left to my own devices, I would have stayed at Polmont, but there's a danger that you start to think that you're indispensable. Part of the reason that I was there for so long which was exceptional because I asked to stay and my line managers allowed me to stay. Additionally, none of my colleagues wanted the job.
174. I thought that the person who did replace me was well suited to the role. He had told me that he was keen. He went in and, within weeks, changed a lot of my key policies. He told the management team that he didn't want to be there. When I heard that, I was so disappointed. Polmont needed a Governor who really wanted to be there and who was really interested in youth justice and young offenders.
175. One of the key changes that I made and that I was very proud of was getting staff out of the traditional uniform. It was about building relationships with prisoners. The prison officer uniform is still largely the same as it was fifty plus years ago. I tried to change it when I was Director of Operations of the SPS, but there was no political will to do it. It was a red line for the union when it came up periodically. No chief executive was ever willing to take it on, even though the private prisons operate a different style of uniform.
176. The union representative did move at Polmont. I could only change the uniform with his agreement because I was openly acting outwith national policy. He agreed to go along with the change if all of the staff in a particular group agreed. He said that if one member of staff objected, he would have to support them. This was fair under the

circumstances although frustrating. I succeeded in two wings. Officers wore t-shirts, jogging bottoms and trainers. I very nearly succeeded in another couple of wings but a small number of staff objected. The staff that did come out of the traditional uniform loved it. They were more relaxed and more likely to engage with and talk to the young people. My successor had them all back in uniform on day one. That was one of my biggest subsequent disappointments.

177. When I left, we were in the process of redesigning and rebuilding Polmont. I had visited the new Forth Valley College at Stirling. I saw the layout and thought it would be ideal for Polmont. Along with my colleague and the design team at headquarters, we designed the education and training unit at Polmont. There was a big space in the middle. I thought that people could congregate there in breaks between classes and it would be more like a further education college. That had been my vision. I was invited back for its opening by my successor. They had incredibly bolted down all the seats. This changed the atmosphere completely. The idea had been to have people milling around. It was risky, but my successor hadn't done it in response to any particular incident. He did it of his own accord as a matter of policy.
178. When I was Acting Director of Operations from 2012 to 2014, I was very interested in Polmont. A good Governor had gone there and I was keen to support her as best I could. I had started the rebuilding of Polmont and it had finished by the time she went there. In her judgement, she decided that the training centre should be completely reconfigured. There were two training centres and I'd been involved in the planning of one. I gave her the money to reconfigure the training centres and also change the reception area. I did offer to try and move on any staff that she wanted out of Polmont. I did the same at Cornton Vale. I couldn't guarantee success, but I said that I'd do my best. There were a number of staff who I'd encountered as Governor of Polmont that I didn't think were suited to working there. In her wisdom, the Governor was adamant that she had 're-educated' them and that she didn't have any ongoing staff issues. I was politely sceptical.
179. No Governor has found Polmont an easy job. I think that the staff culture is still difficult to manage. The population isn't easy, although it's dropped dramatically. That's one

of the great success stories of youth justice in the last twenty years. When I was Governor, it was dropping overall with blips but we didn't know whether that trend was going to be permanent or temporary. Prior to that there had been ups and downs with the young offender population, but the downward trend has been sustained since the 1990s. When I started at Polmont, there were eight or nine hundred convicted young people between Dumfries, Polmont and Glenochil. Now, that figure is less than two hundred. It's a huge success story. The cynical side of me says that we shouldn't shout about it in case Sheriffs think that they're not doing their jobs properly and that they need to send more young people into custody. It would just take one horrific case and things could change. Sheriffs deny that they're influenced by public opinion, but to my mind there's no doubt that they are.

180. I was horrified to read and hear about abuse in care settings. This was in the public domain when I was at Polmont so I was well aware of the wider context. I hope there was no abuse going on during my time at Polmont, but I can't be certain. I had doubts about various staff and doubts about certain situations. I had lots of issues about getting evidence. That would always be my stock answer, give me evidence. What I did at Polmont was to deliberately send out signals to staff that every time I came across possible abuse, it would be investigated and investigated vigorously. That was the consistent message that I put out. It brought a lot of pain on my shoulders, but the message was that any suspicion would be investigated. Hopefully that message got through. I tried to do that whilst at the same time supporting staff in other innovative areas and above all trying to change the culture which was the overarching priority.
181. I was very proud of many of the staff at Polmont. I got more staff awards in my time at Polmont than in the rest of my career put together. I was trying to put it forward as a place for people to get promoted. My objective had been to challenge, in every way I could, the two statements I had heard when I arrived, "It's only Polmont and it's only young offenders." We did a lot of good things, but equally I can think of a multitude of things that we didn't do or that I wish we'd done better. You don't change culture overnight. It takes decades.

Positions held outwith SPS

Secure Care Advisory Group

182. In the early 2000s, I was a member of the Secure Care Advisory Group, chaired by Sally Kuenssberg. It was a fascinating experience. It was the first time that I'd been on a national group and I was the only SPS representative. It was a small and relatively harmonious group. There was a lady from Aberlour Trust on the group, who became a very useful link for me as governor of Polmont. The group had been set up by the Scottish Executive. Our remit was to look at secure unit capacity. At that time, there was a huge amount of interest in youth offending. The complaint was that there wasn't enough secure unit capacity. We were asked to look at the figures and make recommendations.
183. Our recommendations were accepted and there was an expansion of the Secure Unit estate. However, it turned out that there wasn't the demand everyone had said there was. I think that one or two of the new units didn't last very long. The cost of a place in any of the Units was massive and Local Authorities were very reluctant to pay.

Independent Prison Monitoring Advisory Group

184. After my retirement in January 2014, I was invited by the then Chief Inspector of Prisons David Strang to become a member of the Independent Prison Monitoring Advisory Group which he was setting up. After much debate, the Scottish Government decided to replace Visiting Committees with Independent Prison Monitors who would be volunteers recruited, trained and allocated nationally. Responsibility would rest with the Prisons Inspectorate. To that end he was given initially four full time staff to oversee and manage the new setup. Three became full-time regional coordinators with one at the centre who coordinated the coordinators.
185. The chair and the vice-chair were human rights experts, Doctor Alan Mitchell and Jim McManus. There were two retired Governors, including myself, one academic a retired senior health care professional and some independent prison monitors. The purpose

of the advisory group was debated long and hard. Initially, I think we were more of a steering group, trying to steer and inform the four coordinators. None of the three regional coordinators knew anything about justice or prisons. The lady at the centre was well-versed in justice, having worked for the Glasgow Community Justice Authority. She was very knowledgeable, capable and progressive. She had a clear idea as to how things should be evolving.

186. We were starting afresh with a blank piece of paper when it came to the system of prison monitors. They were well-motivated volunteers. Previously, some visiting committee members were interested but the rest would just turn up for their expenses and leave. Monitors were supposed to monitor conditions, adherence to standing orders and hear complaints. The priority given to complaints was always a bit fudged. There was a complaints system so the monitors were an adjunct to that system. Some of them were very comfortable dealing with complaints. Others were very uncomfortable, sitting one-to-one with an angry prisoner, was not what they'd signed up for. I think that in practice the coordinators often were doing the work of the monitors. Progress in my view was slow and variable.
187. I prepared a paper about overcrowding for monitors. A lot of them had never experienced it so it was guidance about what they should look for. Prisons can't control overcrowding, but they can control how they manage it in terms of meals, laundry, visits, length of time in reception, kit, cleanliness. I was thanked for it. I then prepared a second paper with guidance on equality and diversity. The reception was not so positive. I was told that they would use it to guide their thinking. The point in my opinion was that it should be given to monitors.
188. My third paper came after attending an annual conference for monitors. The conference was well-attended. I was in a group with some monitors. There were about six of us in the group. One by one, it transpired that none of the monitors in this group were actually monitoring the segregation units. That to me was one of the primary purposes of monitoring. They were being told by staff that it wasn't convenient and that they should come later. If they did go, they were being told that nobody wanted to see them. The coordinators were either colluding with this or they weren't aware of it.

189. My objective with the paper was that it would be a simple guide to who was in segregation units and why. It explained the importance of the prisoners' records and the monitors should check them adding the date and their signature. It also stated that they must make sure they saw the prisoner and let him tell them that he didn't want to see them if that was the situation. In 90% of cases, prisoners probably would not want to see the monitor. In the eyes of the disaffected prisoner, the monitor is part of the system and not independent. They shouldn't expect to be greeted warmly, but they need to see prisoners face to face and let him tell them that they didn't want to see them or just ignore them. I was initially helped and guided by the later Inspector Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, who gave me numerous references to give me a broader legal and rights based context. I was disappointed with her initial response but she later responded in more detail. Overall I was concerned about the responses of the co-coordinators and after completing some additional work on training I decided that it was the appropriate time for me to resign.

Lessons to be learned

190. Primarily, I think the most important way to protect young people is to find ways to engage with them. We need to do things with young people rather than doing things to them. That's not easy. It's difficult to engage with a population who don't like to be engaged with. In my experience, the odd young person is violent and aggressive but apathy is the biggest challenge. Young people will not think about tomorrow. They just think about today. Trying to engage with them to the extent of sitting down with them and planning where they want to be in five or ten years is difficult if they just shrug their shoulders and say they don't care.
191. An issue I have with the youth justice lobby relates to the formal debate about the age of children. I think it should be sixteen and not eighteen. I think that sixteen and seventeen year olds should be treated in a more flexible, nuanced way. It's not just about listening. The youth justice lobby goes on a lot about listening. That's fine but I would rephrase it as engaging with young people. We need to find the language, techniques and skills to engage with young people and meet them where they are.

192. We need to try and encourage them to have an optimistic view about their future. Given the scale of under-employment and social inequalities of our society, that is not easy. Most of the young people in Polmont were coming from urban poor areas of Scotland. They'd had pretty chaotic lifestyles, at best inconsistent parenting and they had been brought up without good role models. We have to be realistic about young people, where they are and how to engage.
193. We need to find the right people to work with young people. I don't know how you do that. I've no elementary guide to how you do that. There are people out there who want to work with young people. We need to find them, reward them, support them and encourage them. That's a matter for all disciplines and professions. With the exception of one or two small voluntary sector bodies, there is no organisation that exists purely for young people. All the national agencies are now in effect multi-tasking. Even Barnardo's is no longer just about young people. All the charities are muscling in on each other's territory to varying degrees. In an ideal world, we want people who are good with young people and want to be with them. It shouldn't be luck of the draw or a punishment. We had very successful youth workers at Polmont, but that has been squeezed by lack of funding in recent years.
194. I don't think there are any simple solutions when it comes to protecting young people from abuse in custody. I think that young people's attitudes will change, generation by generation. I think that the current generation seem to be very passive and undemanding. They are obsessed with technology and their phones. They are probably not drinking as much as previous generations. They are also probably not taking drugs to the extent of previous generations, although I suspect the use of cannabis is still pretty widespread. The population is rapidly ageing and young people are a smaller percentage of the population. The BBC has a huge problem engaging with young people. How do you engage with young people? How do you make them feel important and special? Young people now are not the same as young people twenty years ago. How quickly can we identify and keep up with their culture?
195. Having the right staff in place is definitely important. I just don't know how you accomplish that. I had some superb staff at Polmont. They would get metaphorically

speaking knocked down but they would pick themselves up again. Some staff went the extra mile for a young person. If it didn't work out, their reaction was that you win some you lose some but kept trying. Other members of staff would not go out of their way again. Time and time again, my management team at Polmont tried to identify the qualities that characterised a member of staff who was good at working with young people. One of my strategic objectives was to design a training module for staff at Polmont. We ended up with qualities that any governor would want in any prison officer. The additional factor seemed to be a simple genuine interest in young people. It was frustrating. We were so near and yet so far. It was really difficult to identify the qualities required. Trying to get staff to think of young people as adolescents did help. You don't come across the term adolescence today very often. It's a term that seems to have dropped out of popular vocabulary. Recognising that young people mature at different stages and ages is a big step forward.

- 196. When it comes to working with prisoners, you want officers who are not going to depend on their uniform. They do a multitude of different jobs and some of them are arguably conflicting. They can be both controlling but also facilitating. You want staff who are interested in their job and the people that they are managing. Fundamentally, I think the challenge in prisons is to treat people as individuals in an institutional setting. All the pressures in an institutional setting are towards impersonalisation and treating people as numbers. That's what you have to guard against. People are not numbers. People are people.

- 197. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..........

Dated..... 26 September 2023