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SCOTTISH HOME AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# Prisons in Scotland

*Report for 1979*

*Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland  
by Command of Her Majesty  
October 1980*

EDINBURGH  
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

Cmnd. 8037

£5.00 net

## CHAPTER SIX

### Health and Hygiene

#### General

90. The general health of inmates was very satisfactory. There was no notable outbreak of serious infection or contagious disease.

91. Hygiene, both individual and institutional, was maintained satisfactorily. Quality and quantity of food were also of a very high standard.

92. The number of inmates reporting sick had shown a steady increase over the previous four years, particularly in 1978. 1979, fortunately, showed an appreciable drop in the number of male inmates on sick parades. In the paragraphs which follow, the figures in brackets are those for 1978.

93. The number of first attendances was 71,935 (80,979) of which 69,372 (78,807) were males and 2,563 (2,172) were females.

94. More than a third of these attendances were for minor complaints of an unspecified nature, but the main causes of morbidity were diseases affecting:—

1. Respiratory System: . . . 12,104 (14,663). Of these the majority suffered the common cold, 8,047 (9,204) or non-streptococcal sore throats, 2,412 (3,023). Influenza was recorded in 438 (581) cases and there was a corresponding fall in cases of pneumonia and bronchitis. This satisfactory drop in the recorded cases of respiratory illness was no doubt associated with very much milder winter months.
2. Teeth: . . . . . 6,327 (7,395).
3. Skin: . . . . . 6,684 (7,395), of which only 1,758 (2,092) were said to be of infective origin ie boils, cellulitis, impetigo.
4. Stomach and Bowels: . . . 4,793 (5,155). Of these, by far the greatest number, 3,631, were unspecified digestive disorders. The incidence of diarrhoeal disease was very small, only 946 (998) cases being recorded. 2 cases of salmonella infection were reported. 20 cases of acute appendicitis were diagnosed and successfully treated in NHS hospitals.
5. Nervous System: . . . . 2,896 (2,872). Of these, the greatest number, 2,031, were classified as suffering from neuroses and personality disorders. 23 (11 male and 12 female), were diagnosed as suffering from psychoses and 9 were classified as mentally defective. 633 received treatment for epilepsy.
6. Infestations: . . . . . Pediculosis, 1,256 (1,693) and scabies 521 (558). The incidence of infestation in new admissions, although still considerable, continued to decrease. The fact that so few as 39 cases of pediculosis and 31 cases of scabies were thought to commence during imprisonment reflects the careful surveillance of establishment hygiene.
7. Eye: . . . . . 1,250 (1,322).
8. Ear: . . . . . 1,215 (1,467).

#### Other Significant Illnesses

95. 62 (71) inmates, 57 male and 5 female, were treated for pulmonary tuberculosis during their sentence. All of these infections had commenced before admission and only one required to be transferred to an outside hospital. The remainder were treated within the institution.

96. Mass radiography units continue to visit institutions at regular intervals. 2,527 male inmates and 122 female inmates were screened during the year. The facility is available to staff during these visits and 106 officers took the opportunity.

97. Cardio-vascular disorders are a common cause of serious disability. 261 inmates required treatment for ischaemic heart disease, hypertension or cerebro-vascular disease. Four required admission to NHS hospitals and four died suddenly within prisons.

98. Examination of every admission ensures the early diagnosis of Venereal Disease. Two cases of syphilis were recorded, 1 male and 1 female. There were 44 cases of gonorrhoea, 32 male and 12 female. All were successfully treated in prison.

#### **Mental Health**

99. Many inmates suffer from nervous conditions and most are treated within institutions by the medical nursing and visiting psychiatrist and psychologist staff.

100. 2,896 first attendances on sick parades were for conditions affecting the nervous system. Psychoses were diagnosed in 23 patients, 11 male and 12 female. 22 inmates, 12 male and 10 female, were transferred to mental hospitals and, of these, 13 were convicted prisoners and 9 were untried.

101. The relationship between over-indulgence in alcohol and anti-social behaviour is well recognised and it is, therefore, no surprise that Alcoholism is a condition frequently requiring treatment in admissions to penal establishments. It is also apparent that this is an increasing cause of morbidity. During the year 800 (724) cases were recorded, 635 (584) male and 165 (140) female. 61 (49) inmates, 24 (16) male and 37 (33) female, required treatment for varying degrees of Delirium Tremens. Many others received treatment for varying degrees of withdrawal symptoms.

102. This may well be a small part of the national problem of alcoholism, but there is no doubt that prison staff, medical and discipline, provide a valuable service in the care of this vulnerable section of the community.

103. Continuing and valued support is received from members of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Councils on Alcoholism, who are given all possible facilities within establishments.

104. The upward trend in alcohol-related problems in female offenders is obvious and unfortunate. At Cornton Vale a programme is being developed within the Institution Health Centre on a day release basis for those with drink problems. This is in its early stages, but the enthusiasm of staff is most encouraging and their training in this work is greatly assisted by community and NHS agencies with interest and expertise in this problem.

105. Drug dependency diagnosed within Scottish penal establishments, fortunately, does not present a serious problem and there has been little change in the numbers requiring treatment in recent years. Dependence on "hard" drugs was recorded in 14 (9) cases, 5 (1) males and 9 (8) females. Dependence on other drugs was recorded in 21 (23) cases, 15 males and 6 females.

### Dental Care

106. General dental care is available to all inmates, provided by visiting dental practitioners to most establishments, where excellent dental surgery facilities are provided. In the few places where this is not feasible very satisfactory arrangements are made with local practitioners to treat inmates in their private surgeries.

107. 6,327 (7,395) inmates received treatment during the year.

### National Health Service Facilities

108. As far as possible inmates are treated within establishments, but full NHS facilities are available when required. During the year 199 (198) male and 27 (41) female patients were transferred to general hospitals.

109. Blood Transfusion Service mobile units visit most establishments at intervals and this year 2,851 pints of blood were donated by inmates and 249 by staff.

### Mortality

110. During the year 9 deaths occurred within prisons. 8 were male inmates and 1 female. 6 of these deaths were from natural causes. 4 males died as a result of coronary thrombosis and 1 died as a result of delirium tremens. The female death, occurring shortly after admission, was the result of hepatic failure, a consequence of cirrhosis of the liver.

111. 3 adult males committed suicide, 2 by self strangulation by hanging and 1 died from multiple injuries after jumping from a top gallery.

112. Despite the number of inmates who suffer from emotional and personality upsets, the number of deaths as a result of suicide remains very small. This reflects great credit on the care and vigilance of all staff.

The deaths by suicide for the past ten years are:—

1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
2	0	3	2	3	2	1	4	3	4	3

### Medical and Nursing Staff

113. General medical services are provided by 3 full time medical officers and 22 part time medical officers. The part time medical officers are all general practitioners, working within the NHS, and they are assisted by their partners in ensuring that all establishments receive full time medical cover.

114. Psychiatric services are provided by 15 visiting Consultant Psychiatrists who hold joint appointments shared by the NHS and Prisons Division. These regular services cover all Scottish penal institutions, ensure that psychiatric care is available and maintain liaison with the NHS Mental Health Services. The Consultant Psychiatrists are often assisted by Senior Registrars who are encouraged to work in penal establishments as a part of their specialist training.

115. Seven prison officers completed their Enrolled Nurse Training during the year at NHS Nursing Schools, 4 in Glasgow and 3 in Edinburgh.

## APPENDIX No. 7

## RECEPTIONS—PERSONS UNDER SENTENCE—OFFENCES AND SENTENCES OF ADMISSIONS

1979

Number

OFFENCES	Total Receptions Persons under sentence			Sentenced to—															
				Imprisonment				Young Offenders Institution				Detention in a Detention Centre		Recall from Borstal Supervision		Recall to Young Offenders Institution		Other	
				Directly		In default of payment of fine		Directly		In default of payment of fine		Borstal Training							
	T.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
All crimes and offences . . . . .	14,447	13,792	655	15,628	277	4,824	248	1,266	49	913	42	532	38	591	38	1	—	—	—
Crimes . . . . .	8,739	8,429	310	3,930	147	2,110	75	995	34	453	23	453	30	461	27	1	—	—	—
Offences . . . . .	5,708	5,363	345	1,698	130	2,714	173	271	15	460	19	79	8	130	11	—	—	—	—
CLASS I: CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON																			
Total . . . . .	1,910	1,879	31	998	19	394	3	288	5	77	2	63	2	58	1	—	—	—	—
Murder . . . . .	35	35	—	19	—	—	—	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Attempts to murder, etc. . . . .	35	34	1	17	1	—	—	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Culpable homicide . . . . .	33	31	2	23	2	—	—	7	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Assaults . . . . .	1,545	1,521	24	785	13	363	3	203	5	68	2	54	1	47	1	—	—	—	—
Cruel and unnatural treatment of children . . . . .	6	3	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Incest . . . . .	9	9	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unnatural crimes, including attempts . . . . .	6	6	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rape and other offences against females . . . . .	76	76	—	39	—	1	—	28	—	—	—	3	—	5	—	—	—	—	—
Other crimes against the person . . . . .	165	164	1	97	1	30	—	17	—	9	—	6	—	5	—	—	—	—	—
CLASS II: CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY WITH VIOLENCE																			
Total . . . . .	2,655	2,630	25	1,179	6	366	4	434	6	169	—	247	9	221	14	—	—	—	—
Housebreaking, etc. . . . .	2,438	2,422	16	1,060	4	362	3	383	5	164	—	231	4	208	14	—	—	—	—
Robbery, and assaults with intent, etc. . . . .	211	204	7	116	2	3	1	51	1	5	—	16	3	13	—	—	—	—	—
Other crimes against property with Violence . . . . .	6	4	2	3	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
CLASS III: CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY WITHOUT VIOLENCE																			
Total . . . . .	3,574	3,339	235	1,599	112	996	63	244	20	187	21	135	18	166	12	1	—	—	—
Theft . . . . .	2,967	2,768	199	1,253	89	831	56	220	18	171	17	131	18	150	12	1	—	—	—
Reset . . . . .	173	161	12	103	5	40	5	8	1	6	1	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	—
Breach of trust and embezzlement . . . . .	32	26	6	21	6	3	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fraud . . . . .	371	353	18	208	12	121	2	10	1	9	3	2	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
Post Office offences . . . . .	14	14	—	10	—	1	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against property without Violence . . . . .	17	17	—	4	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

CLASS IV: MALICIOUS INJURIES TO PROPERTY																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	</
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