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The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
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18 December 2025

Dear Convener

Fatal Accident Inquiries - Ministerial Accountability Board Update

I wrote to you in May this year to inform the Committee about the establishment of the Ministerial Accountability Board (MAB). This was set up to oversee progress of all Katie Allan, William Lindsay and Jack McKenzie FAI recommendations accepted by Scottish Ministers, and to drive forward the delivery of the necessary reforms to ensure prisons are safe and rehabilitative. I said I would continue to keep Parliament informed as work in this area progressed.

In line with that commitment, two progress reports have been published today on the Scottish Government webpage, providing further detail on the work of the MAB: [September report](#) and [December report](#).

These reports contain self-reported information collected for MAB meetings which indicate the progress made to date in carrying out the recommendations, and progress in relation to additional actions committed by me in response to the FAIs. The information within these reports is provided by those responsible for completing the work, known as action owners, and named as Scottish Government, Forth Valley Health Board and Scottish Prison Service. This information is reported to the MAB, strengthening independent oversight of the issues and helping to focus discussions on ensuring promised reforms are delivered.

There have been three meetings of the Ministerial Accountability Board (MAB) since I last updated Parliament in May. A workplan has been developed and published on the MAB webpage ([Fatal Accident Inquiries: Ministerial Accountability Board - work plan - gov.scot](#)) which sets out the thematic approach to focus each MAB meeting on different overarching areas of reform. The first meeting in June agreed ways of working; the second in September focused on progress in relation to suicide prevention in prisons and the third meeting in December focused on improving the sharing of information between agencies to support the care of those in custody. Minutes of the meetings are published on the MAB webpage ([Fatal Accident Inquiries: Ministerial Accountability Board - gov.scot](#)).

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Members of the MAB have also visited two prisons, HMP & YOI Stirling and HMP & YOI Polmont, where they were able to see firsthand preparations for the Signs of Life technology pilot, observe a demonstration of cell auditing with a tool that checks where a ligature anchor point may be present and discuss the new 72hr admissions policy for young people. Through the dialogue amongst MAB members and action owners there has been challenges and sensitivities surfaced particularly around the implementation of more complex recommendations that will need to be carefully managed to ensure that prisoner wellbeing remains paramount and changes are sustainable.

In total there are 43 recommendations and commitments being tracked. The latest progress report for December notes that 8 of these are currently marked as completed. These include the removal of bunk beds from areas in which young people are accommodated in HMP & YOI Polmont, the removal of identified door stops, implementation of a 24 hour concern line, sharing of mental health referrals, a new observation policy, training on accurate record keeping, revision of the Death In Prison Learning Audit & Review (DIPLAR) process to ensure physical environment is considered and the appointment of 4 independent DIPLAR Chairs.

Of the remaining recommendations and commitments, 6 are currently rated as green, 22 are rated as amber-green and 7 are rated as amber-red. None of the recommendations are currently rated as red/unachievable. Details on the red, amber, green ratings are provided in the annex to the published reports.

Scottish Prison Service progress

In February 2025, SPS set up a Taskforce to oversee, coordinate and ensure delivery of urgent reforms across the SPS predominately in relation to the FAI recommendations. The Taskforce has met on 12 occasions this year and ensures SPS wide accountability, transparency and delivery of urgent reforms across the Scottish Prison Service while working in collaboration with the Scottish Government, NHS and other key justice partners and stakeholders.

On 2nd December, SPS published its delivery strategy, “SPS Commitment to Change: Our approach to delivering Fatal Accident Inquiry Recommendations”, which underpins the work already in progress [Our commitment to change | Scottish Prison Service](#). Alongside this is information on progress which SPS, as an Action Owner, provides updates to the MAB.

SPS will publish a further chapter of their Commitment to Change in relation to suicide prevention in tandem with the publication of the Independent Review of Talk to Me completed by Professor Graham Towl tomorrow (19th December). The overhaul of TTM by 31st December was a commitment I made in parliament following the FAI determinations and marks an important change in the way in which SPS embed crisis support within the prison setting.

The MAB will meet again in February and March, after which a final report will be prepared and published that summarises the work of the MAB in its agreed lifecycle of 10 months.

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I noted in my statement to Parliament earlier this year that increased transparency is what leads to accountability and change. The publishing of these progress reports upholds that commitment to transparency and is a key milestone of the work underway to deliver on the FAI recommendations. Progress has been made but we know there is much more to do. I will continue to scrutinise delivery to ensure we continue to drive that change.

I hope the Committee has found this information useful and I will update Parliament again in March 2026.



ANGELA CONSTANCE

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