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Linda Pollock
Deputy Chief Executive
3 December 2025

Audrey Nicoll
Convenor, Criminal Justice Committee
Scottish Parliament
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Dear Ms Nicoll

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE FOLLOW UP ITEMS FROM SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE PRE-BUDGET EVIDENCE SESSION 19 NOVEMBER

Thank you for your email dated 25 November following up on the points SPS agreed to provide to the Committee after our evidence session on 19 November 2025.

For ease, I have enclosed below further information on the requests in order they were raised.

1. The Prisoner Pathway Project

I can advise SPS is undertaking a programme of work – the Prisoner Pathway Programme which will review and revise case management and progression processes. This programme is focused on establishing a more individualised, streamlined approach to case management which reflects risks, needs and responsivity. The overarching aim is to establish clear prisoner pathways underpinned by a single plan for each prisoner to support their journey through custody and into the community. This will focus on the management of remand and sentenced prisoners, with an initial focus on statutory prisoners.

This programme will build on enabling work already undertaken by SPS in relation to case management and responds to the HMIPS thematic review of progression, the Care inspectorates thematic review of Prison Based Social Work, and the results of the prison survey. Along with staff, prisoner and stakeholder views.

This programme is currently in the scoping and design phase (until March 2026), and the design and testing phases will start from April next year. This work will be taken forward under 4 projects focused on:

- **Staff Training & Development** – focused on establishing clear roles and responsibilities in relation to case management for SPS staff, underpinned by training and support.
- **Operational Delivery Systems** – establishing clear, streamlined case management processes within SPS, removing duplication and improving alignment to give a more holistic perspective to better address risks and meet needs.
- **Governance, Assurance & Business Improvement** – establishing more consistent governance arrangements around case management, supported by data.
- **Opportunities, Rehabilitation and Reintegration** – supporting consistent application of progression processes for improved community testing, supporting wider access to reintegration and rehabilitation opportunities including, but not limited to, wider access to offender behaviour programmes.

This programme will run until 2028 when the approaches developed under this approach will become business as usual, supported by ongoing evaluation.

2. The number of prison officers which would equate to the additional £5m in national insurance costs from changes to employer NIC

I can advise that based on a residential prison officers' annual salary in 2025, including employer on-costs (pension & NI contributions), this would equate to approximately 97 new start prison officers, this is based on direct salary costs only.

3. Further information on the budgets around specific groups which need to be prioritised for work on rehabilitation and planning for release. Also, information on the costs/amount of resource SPS would need to provide services to remand prisoners similar to those which support short- and long-term prisoners.

SPS seeks to offer rehabilitation opportunities to everyone in our care. The current population pressures both in terms of numbers and complexity of the population mean we are not able to deliver this support to the level we would wish to.

The rehabilitation offered for all prisoners is dependent on their specific needs and includes offender behaviour programmes, family support, support for addiction, mental health problems and work opportunities. These services are provided on the basis of assessed risk and need and not by population group – although remand prisoners are governed by different legislative arrangements than sentenced prisoners.

It is unfortunately not possible to provide specific costings for these services which are delivered by SPS staff and our partners. It is also not possible to provide specific costings in relation to the provision of different services or supports for remand prisoners at this time as these would be very dependent on individual need and length of time on remand etc.

We are building on the learning from the use of emergency early release and the change in the release point for short term prisoners brought about by the Prisoners (early release) (Scotland) Act 2025 in terms of release planning for short-term prisoners. In particular, the use of the rapid needs assessment approach, to identify support needs on release.

4. Costs to allow SPS to prepare for the new legislation which has been enacted regarding early release

The financial memorandum for the Prisoners (Early Release) (Scotland) Act 2025 included detail on the likely costs for SPS in relation to changing the release point for short-term prisoners as follows:

Item	One off implementation cost (for 100 releases)	Recurring costs annually
Staff costs relating to the project team, release process, manual calculation of warrants, pre-release planning and additional administration.	£428,399 to £443,511 for 100 releases	No costs identified
Updating of warrant calculation training and guidance materials.	£21,740	No costs identified
Development of a “Service Now” database to record re-calculated warrants, allocate tranche release dates and ensure data is stored securely.	£50,000	No costs identified
Salary costs for a Legal Services team to support operation of the Victim Notification Scheme	£20,775	No costs identified.

In total, 312 people were released under this scheme in the initial tranches. The above costs are considered to have been accurate – reflecting the total numbers released.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely



LINDA POLLOCK
Deputy Chief Executive