Case Management in New South Wales Correctional Centres

Report for Regional Commanders and Correctional Centre Executive Committees in the NSW Department of Corrective Services

Confidential

March 1999

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION
Acknowledgements

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Alerts**  Entries in a case file which alert staff to an inmate’s serious medical, psychological, or other problems. For example, if the inmate has a predisposition to self-harm, an addiction problem, or needs to go into secure custody (protection).

**Blue/green**  Officers (wear blue) and inmates (wear green)

**Bluys**  Blue inmate application forms

**Bungs and brews**  Cigarettes and tea or coffee

**CALT**  Central Agencies Liaison Team

**CC**  Correctional centre

**Classo**  Security classification of inmates

**CMS**  Case management supervisor

**CMT**  Case Management Team

**Custodials**  Custodial officer

**D&A/AOD**  Drug and alcohol counsellor/alcohol and other drug counsellor (same person, slightly different title)

**DCS**  Department of Corrective Services New South Wales

**Dog**  The name given to an inmate who 'dobbs' on someone to an officer or other authority.

**Dynamic security**  All the security of the correctional centre that is not related to physical security. For example, intelligence information versus gates and handcuffs.

**Industries/overseers**  The place of employment or the custodial officer in charge where inmates are engaged in paid employment at the correctional centre.

**PRC**  Program Review Committee

**Ramp a cell**  Search a cell, usually very thoroughly, usually by emptying all drawers, containers, cupboards, etc. and stripping the bed.

**Reception, Screening and Induction**  The process of initially interviewing an inmate when first received into custody, and their induction into the custodial process.
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Screw  Corrections officer
SORC  Serious Offenders Review Council
Sweeper  Inmate with a trusted job, usually something like sweeping the wing floors, or administration areas.
Tipped  "Getting tipped" is to be moved from one correctional centre to another.

BACKGROUND

Since 1997 the Independent Commission Against Corruption has been conducting an investigation, called Operation Cadix, into certain aspects of the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services (DCS), particularly the conduct of certain officers of the Department. The investigation has been focusing on:

... conduct which illustrates particular aspects of corruption or opportunities for corruption within the correctional centres system. These examples will be used to highlight actual or potential weaknesses in systems with the aim being to identify and promote necessary reforms (ICAC, 1998, p. 1).

The investigation has revealed, among other things, that several custodial officers had engaged in corrupt conduct in relation to aspects of the case management of inmates, particularly in their relationships with inmates and the contents and security of inmates' case files. These officers had developed improper relationships with current and previous inmates. In evidence, one officer indicated that it was because of case management, and having to get to know inmates, that he over-stepped the professional boundary in his relationships. Another officer admitted removing a number of pages from an inmate's case file. The inmate knew that these documents would be likely to have a detrimental impact on his application for a lower security classification and he asked the officer to remove them. The officer subsequently accepted a payment of $500 for removing the documents. The importance of officer/inmate relationships has been recognised in the literature (for example see Edney, 1997; Great Britain Home Office, 1984).

Since approximately 1993/4, case management has been the process used by the DCS to manage inmates in full time custody, and its implementation radically changed the role of the correctional officer. No longer did officers have a purely custodial function, keeping a general watch over all inmates. Case management requires each officer to have a case load, that is, responsibility for overseeing a small number of inmates whose behaviour they monitor and report. As case officers, they keep a particular watch on those inmates, regularly interacting with them to ensure the inmate has no particular problems or need for assistance. The inmate's responsibility is to address the causes of their offending behaviour. Inmates are encouraged to seek out their case officer for advice and assistance. Officers record observations and events, both positive and negative, in the inmate's case file. The case file is considered to be a confidential, accurate record of the inmate's behaviour and achievements while in custody. DCS committees with responsibility for making decisions about the inmate's security classification, access to programs, work release and parole use the case file as their main source of information about the inmate. Therefore the contents of the case file determine how the inmate will be processed by the system.
The introduction of management processes such as case management indicate an emphasis on the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into society rather than punishment of them. There are several ‘signals’ in modern corrections that indicate that contemporary approaches to corrections management have shifted away from the old institutionalised ‘imprison and punish’ models to models with a more humane approach. For example, in New South Wales, jails and prisons are now generally called correctional centres, prison officers and guards are now correctional officers, and prisoners are referred to as inmates. What has become clear from this research is that case management in New South Wales correctional centres is one aspect of a large, dynamic and multi-faceted system of corrections and inmate management.

The emerging issues from the Cadix hearings, and the obvious importance of case management as the key element in the management of inmates in custody, indicated that an exploratory research project on the subject would provide important information and insights. This has been the case. The full cooperation of Department of Corrective Services Commissioner Keliher, and DCS in the conduct of this research is gratefully acknowledged. At the time of writing, discussions with DCS regarding the findings are on-going.

ABOUT CORRECTIONAL CENTRES

By way of providing a ‘feel for’ the context in which this research was conducted, it is important to make some preliminary comments about correctional centres, or jails, and their environment. Correctional centres are unique, closed, unpleasant institutions that incarcerate many very unhappy people. Correctional centres are not like the ‘outside’ world. They are complex places with their own rules, patterns of interaction, and to some degree, language. They operate in a way that is unlike anything the average person will ever experience. They do not operate on the same set of common assumptions about behaviour and human interactions that apply within the general community. Relationships and interactions within correctional centres are bound by written and unwritten rules relating to authority and status. Most inmates and officers abide by these rules: inmates because they have no choice and get punished if they do not, and officers because they have the authority, and that is the way they do their job. This is what is commonly referred to as ‘officer culture’ and ‘inmate culture’.

While acknowledging that not all officers fall into a homogeneous category of ‘typical officer’, in general terms, New South Wales officer culture implies that: in the carriage of duties, officers do things the way other officers do them; use the often deprecating jargon of the job; have a cynical attitude toward ‘the system’ (Management); are suspicious of inmates; think most of them are liars and manipulative and do not really like talking to officers; use their authority to keep inmates under control; think they are a better person than an inmate; never report another officer for anything; and are a member of the union.

Inmate culture is equally strong and implies that: it is in inmates’ best interests not to get on the ‘wrong side’ of an officer; turn a blind eye to things that should not happen; never report another inmate for anything; do not like talking to officers; think that officers are lazy, authoritative, and cynical; that inmates, as individuals, should be treated more like human beings; and that the only way to get accurate information is from other inmates. However, between correctional centres things seem to differ somewhat. This appears to be for two basic reasons. The first is the security classification of the inmates, which dictates the way they are treated, and the second is the particular officer culture that predominates at that centre. The effect of classification was particularly evident at one centre where inmates appeared to be more depressed and subdued than at any of the others. At another, the effect of officer culture was particularly evident in the tension between the officers as union members and Management, to the point where the Management seemed unable to require officers to do anything without first having it agreed to by the union representatives on site. Case management at this correctional centre is virtually non-existent, and officers had a particular attitude toward it. One of the officers had a unique expression for inmates who he thought were not doing the right thing. These he referred to as ‘replies’. At another centre where the officer culture also seemed particularly strong, when asked what he would do if an officer made life difficult for him, one inmate’s initial response was “probably attack him”.

The architecture of a jail is another factor that appears to influence culture because the style of the buildings seems to facilitate or inhibit particular ways of managing inmates. One researcher has noted that it appears to be difficult to change process and practice when there is little or no commensurate change in the physical environment. That is, people associate the old place with the old values and old ways of doing things (Aguilera, 1990).

All these factors combine to make correctional centres volatile, often dangerous, and extremely complex places to manage.

STATISTICS ABOUT NEW SOUTH WALES CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In order to provide a ‘sketch of the landscape’ of the Department, the following statistics are provided as background information relating to the size of the bureaucracy and the number of people for whom it has responsibility. New South Wales has the largest prison system in Australia. It is important to remember that the vast majority of inmates will eventually be released back into the community.

- The Department employs over 4800 people, of whom more than 3300 are operational staff at correctional centres and courts.
- At 30 June 1997 the Department was responsible for 29 correctional centres, 13 periodic detention centres, and a substantial number of other sites and centres.

1 NSW Department of Corrective Services Annual Report 1996-97.
including the privately operated Junee Correctional Centre which accommodates 9.4% of the average daily inmate population).

- On 4 July 1997 the new 900-bed MRRC (Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre) at Silverwater was opened. It accommodates mainly unconvicted people, remands, newly convicted inmates awaiting classification, and people required to appear before a Sydney metropolitan court. The MRRC is the largest correctional centre in Australasia.

- Modifications are being made to Goulburn Correctional Centre to accommodate more extreme or high risk inmates.

- Cessnock Correctional Centre is being upgraded to accommodate maximum security inmates.

- At 29 June 1997 there were over 6400 people in full-time custody, with over half the inmates classified as minimum security (see Tables 1 and 2).

- On average, it costs $165.47 per day to keep each offender in secure custody.

- Seventy per cent of all inmates are classified as minimum security.

- Seventy per cent of all inmates have been involved in drug-related offences.

### Table 1: Total number of persons in full-time custody as at June 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6057</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>6411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

94% 6% 100%

NSW DCS (1998a) NSW Inmate Census 1997

### Table 2: Total number of inmates at each level of security classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security classification</th>
<th>Number and % of inmates classified at this level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>1128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>3726</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remand/Trial</td>
<td>991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NSW DCS (1998a) NSW Inmate Census 1997

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3 Junee is the first correctional institution in Australia "to be designed, constructed and managed by the private sector under a single contract arrangement" (NSW Department of Corrective Services (1994) 1993-94 Annual Report, p.30).

4 See Appendix 1 for an outline of the classification process.

6 It is anticipated that the total number of inmates will reach 7000 by the end of January 1999 (Garcia, 1998).

5 Commissioner Keliher's address to the Australia and New Zealand Society of Criminology Annual Conference, July 1998 (NSW Department of Corrective Services 1998b).

6 op. cit.
INTRODUCTION

This section of the report provides a glimpse of the broader landscape of the development of prisons, the treatment of prisoners and thus the role of the prison officer. It commences with a sketch of early penology, particularly in England, and discusses the historical context of corrections in New South Wales.

In order to undertake this part of the research, a number of lengthy and extensive literature searches were conducted. However, they revealed little in the way of research about case management in correctional settings either in Australia or overseas. Others have noted lack of scholarship regarding prison life, particularly from the point of view of the officers and inmates (Edney, 1997; Wortley, 1987). Much of the literature that is available discusses case management within a medical, allied health, or addiction treatment setting, i.e., the ‘medical model’ of case management. Of the few writings found that do discuss corrections, some have contributions from people in the medical field. This indicates that corrections case management appears to have evolved from the medical model. Of necessity, therefore, some literature that is tangential or that provides background has been referred to, for example, the development of prisons and prison management, or prison officers’ attitudes towards their job or offenders.

Penal reform is complex. It is multi-faceted and driven by a number of competing forces: political expediency, social change, public opinion, and economic efficiency to name a few (Lucken, 1997). Modern corrections management is a difficult and dynamic part of the public sector, and like all areas of management, it is subject to shifts and changes in policy, which filter down, to a greater or lesser degree, to alter practice. This is what Lucken refers to as the words-versus-deed dichotomy (p. 367). In the current climate of budgetary constraint, that is, ‘doing more with less’, the needs of people in custody and those who work there have to be tempered with economic efficiency. Perhaps the greatest challenge to corrections management has been the question of how best to manage inmates. In the latter part of this century there has been a major shift in opinions about this. Current trends are toward more humane treatment of inmates, giving them more responsibility than ever before for making changes to their own behaviour. Nonetheless, the ‘old’ idea of locking criminals away from the rest of society does not appear to be losing its popularity. In New South Wales, for example, the occupancy rate of correctional centres is currently approximately 104%, “well above the internationally accepted benchmark of between 85 and 90 per cent” (Garcia, 1998).  

Historical context of corrections: A brief sketch

There have been several important phases in the evolution of prisons. While none seems to have had a singularly long-lasting impact, each has resulted in some change in the treatment of prisoners, at least for a while. Their relevance to the evolution of penology is clear. In offering alternatives to the conventional and brutal penal systems of the day in Britain and Europe, these changes demonstrate that concern about the treatment of incarcerated people has been around for a long time. For example, one important early phase is attributed to William Penn and the Quakers in Pennsylvania in the very late 1600s and first half of the 1700s. Penn believed that when offenders were locked away from society the opportunity could be used to rehabilitate them, without the use of corporal punishment (Shaffer, 1998). This was a radical concept at that time as criminals were thought to be hopeless cases. The Quakers built and used a number of prisons founded on these principles.

Another phase was inspired by Beccaria’s 1764 document, On Crime and Punishments (cited in Grant, 1992). He is attributed with espousing “the first theory of criminal justice”, based on five key principles of human dignity (p. 32). The essence of these principles became enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence. However, when two Frenchmen visited the United States in 1831, over 50 years later, their observation was that:

In locking up criminals, nobody thinks of rendering them better, but only of taming their malice; they are put in chains like ferocious beasts; and instead of being corrected, they are rendered brutal (Toch, 1996, p.497 citing De Beaumont and de Tocqueville).

In the latter part of the 1700s Jeremy Bentham had been concerned that prisoners in England were in a similar state. He made an important contribution to the contemporary discourse about the condition of prisons and the inhuman treatment of prisoners. Bentham made a number of recommendations in an attempt to reform prisons in Britain and parts of Europe. He designed the well-known Panopticon and, as part of his reformist theory, said that different crimes should be punished differently, that is, “the punishment should fit the crime”, a phrase that has been attributed to him (Shaffer, 1998a, p. 181). The Panopticon was a circular prison with a central tower where prisoners could be watched all the time by few guards. This design had obvious economic appeal on both financial and human resources grounds, but it had a number of serious deficiencies, for example, ventilation. The Panopticon was never built in England, but one was built in Russia, and two in the United States. The lasting impact of Bentham’s ideas is evident in today’s prisons.

By the mid-1800s English gaols and workhouses, which had previously been separate institutions with separate reasons for existence, combined and became known as prisons (Grant, 1992). Prisons were used to incarcerate offenders for periods of time until punishment could be meted out. Often this was some kind of corporal punishment, like flogging or the stocks, or transportation. Execution was not uncommon. There was little if
any attempt at rehabilitation and little thought was given to the condition of prisons or prisoners. Conditions for prison guards or 'turnkeys' were not much better, but at least they were not locked up or flogged.

THE CONTEXT OF CORRECTIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

The historical roots of penology in New South Wales were transported with settlement, governance and convicts. A brutal regime of prisoner treatment and punishment continued for decades, and, despite Governor Macquarie’s attempts to change things, reform was very slow. For example, it was the early 1900s before remission was available and a basic system of prisoner classification was used. As a corollary, about that time, different prisons were being used for different types of prisoners. For example, Darlinghurst was used as a reception centre, Goulburn for first offenders, Bathurst for “hopeful recidivists”, Parramatta for the less hopeful, and Grafton for sex offenders (Grant, 1992, p. 51). However, brutality was still rife. Prison officers were still ‘turnkeys’ whose sole function was to ensure that prisoners conformed to the rules.

By 1950 a series of basic but important developments had occurred, for example, extended out of cell time, daily ablutions, and access to books. Also, those in charge of managing prisons were looking beyond the shores of New South Wales at how things were done elsewhere. The catalyst for one development in the early 1940s came from Canada. A Canadian Royal Commission into their prison system had recommended that intractable prisoners should be separated from mainstream prisoners. As a result, a decision was made to use a section of Grafton in this way. Intractables were put into small groups, with only one group being moved at any time, always outnumbered by prison officers. A similar situation still exists today in one correctional centre in New South Wales. Probably the most important development, although not new in terms of an ideological concept, was more consideration of the idea that people were being sent to prison as punishment, not for punishment. One indicator of this was the forming of the first security classification committee for prisoners, and the development of a system of parole.

Over the next twenty-five years a number of administrators brought their own philosophy to the management of New South Wales prisons and a range of programs were instituted, for example periodic detention and attendance at education programs external to the prison. In the 1970s, for the first time, all prisons in the state were brought under the one administration system.

However, officers were still acting in a purely custodial capacity and the tension that was emerging between punishment (in practice) and rehabilitation (as policy) appears to have been ignored. The good order of the prison was still based on officers implementing regulations and the use of severe discipline and authority in order to bring about prisoner compliance. The continuing inmate unrest at Bathurst in the 1970s and eventual destruction of the prison by riots in 1974 are testimony to the inappropriateness of that type of regime. However, despite evidence from inmates about what was happening and the brutality of officers during the riots, as well as during a peaceful sit-down protest by inmates in 1980 at Parramatta, no officers were prosecuted (Grabosky, 1989).

Some two years after the Bathurst riots, because of political pressure, a Royal Commission into New South Wales Prisons commenced. A damning final report was issued by Mr Justice Nagle in 1978, four years after the riots. The report recommended 252 changes to practices and policies, including the establishment of a Commission to administer the Department of Corrective Services (DCS), and, more humane treatment of prisoners. It was also recommended that prisoners be given more information about what they could expect when in prison (an induction), and access to education and other programs.

Bathurst was reopened in 1982 with an experimental management plan to put unit management into place in the prison, whereby inmates would not live in large cell blocks, but in small groups, with the same officers responsible for them each day. One of the objectives of unit management was to keep the same group of officers working in a unit over a period of time. In that way the officers and inmates would get to know each other better and, hopefully, the atmosphere would be less volatile than was previously the case. A subsequent report from the Department indicated that unit management worked well, with an improvement in the attitudes of inmates and officers towards each other (McLennan, Gorta & Simmons, 1987).

Unit management was the first time a real change in the role of the officer had been attempted in the New South Wales correctional system. Nevertheless, wider change across the system was slow because, by then, previous, and well-known events had reinforced the traditional authority and culture of the officers. For example, there was major, bitter industrial turmoil involving prison officers for a long period following the Royal Commission, coinciding with the efforts of the first head of the new DCS Commission, Dr Tony Vinson, to implement Justice Nagle’s recommendations. This turmoil had a major impact on the capacity of Management to manage prisons, the willingness of prison officers to consider the changes and do their job, and the effectiveness of services and programs for inmates. Underlying the turmoil was really a difference in ideology about how inmates should be managed and thus the role and status of the prison officer. The key issue was that Dr Vinson, and Justice Nagle’s recommendations, advocated a more remedial role for officers than had previously been the case. But, despite the fact that most of the 252 recommendations were eventually implemented, commensurate changes were not made to prison officer training. Training for new recruits continued to emphasise the custodial, authority, and rule-bound aspects of the job. For example, the first six weeks of training focussed on “Institutional Procedures, Law, Self-Defence, Supervision of Inmates, and Weapons” (Day, 1982, p. 5), then a recall, after 45 weeks working on-the-job, for “instruction in security equipment and riot control and (revision of) prison practice and procedure” (p. 6). Industrial turmoil continued, resulting on one occasion in a bitter 35-day strike by prison officers in 1984.
Despite Justice Nagle’s recommendations, in due course the management of inmates reverted once again to the traditional custodial model, and other changes that had been put in place, and relevant to the early shift towards what is now called case management, were showing signs of demise. For example, in 1988 it was reported that programs in New South Wales prisons were not reaching the right prisoners as the need for high security precluded access to them, or some programs were just not available (Porritt 1988). It was also reported that prisoners lacked information about the availability and suitability of programs. Significantly, it was also reported that open communication, concern and trust for good relationships between officers and prisoners was important. Ten years later in the interviews for this research, these same issues emerged.

The difficulties that had been experienced in prisons trying to bring about changes to practice were enormous and complex. First, the changes were by edict, not by negotiation, and second, new practices were put into place in old settings: old settings – old values and culture (Aguilera, 1990).

Like many parts of the public sector in the past two decades, the management of prisons has been subjected to major reform and changing philosophies; albeit for prisons the catalyst has often been major incidents and industrial problems. Despite efforts to reform, some commentators have observed that the three principles of the workhouse: deterrence, retribution, and incapacitation, “still bolster the foundation of contemporary correctional models” (Shaffer, 1998b, p. 543 citing Barnes and Teeters). Corrections in New South Wales has certainly had a tumultuous and often ad hoc path down that road.

The Bathurst riots, the brutal treatment of inmates at Goulburn, the use of Grafton as a prison for the state’s worst criminals, and the generally poor treatment of prisoners over a long period of time, have resulted in reputations for officers and those institutions that are proving difficult to overcome. These things are still in the minds of inmates and officers today and were mentioned by a number of the interviewees.

However, in the last ten years or so, significant changes have been made. Several models of managing inmates in full-time custody have had varying degrees of popularity, with a “responsibility model”, or case management as it has come to be known, gaining the widest acceptance. It is basically a behaviour modification approach. Through a structured, individualised program, case management gives inmates responsibility for addressing the causes of their offending behaviour. Their progress is monitored by an officer and recorded in the case file. Inmates have their behaviour reinforced through a series of positive and negative measures, for example the gaining or losing of privileges or their level of classification. These are very serious sanctions for inmates and the results of this research indicated that they take them very seriously.

The introduction of case management is an example of an organisation taking a major shift in perspective about how some of its core activities should be managed. However, implementing a commensurate change in practice has proved to be frustrating. For example, when case management was first introduced, Management seemed unable to foster a climate and structure conducive to officers accepting their changed role. According to officers, other DCS staff, and union officials, the perception was that officers were expected to take on the new role without proper training or the necessary resources and structures to support it. Consequently, some remember the introduction of case management as being frustrated by the union, whereas others remember the inadequacies of the initial training, which in turn has led to an almost heuristic, or idiosyncratic, approach to case management. It sent a message to officers (and inmates) that case management was not really to be taken too seriously. When first introduced, it was thought that case management would also help to solve a communication problem that had been recognised in relation to the services of the Inmate Development Staff (IDS – educators, counsellors, psychologists, etc.) and inmates. IDS had only a small number of inmates using their services. It was thought that case management would encourage the IDS to be more proactive in ‘seeking out’ inmates who needed their services, and also that it would encourage more inmates to use IDS services. It was also hoped that case management would be seen as an opportunity for more communication between different staff who were all seeing the same inmates.

THE ROLE OF THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

As recently as ten years ago, the role of a correctional officer was purely custodial with their authority reinforced by the well-defined hierarchical order established within the prison. The officer’s job was to oversee the good order of the prison, to keep records and maintain a social and psychological distance from prisoners. Prisons really were secure warehouses for people. The role of the correctional officer today is very different, and the importance of it has been acknowledged (Great Britain Home Office, 1984; Hill, 1988; Jurik, 1985; Paterson, 1988). A number of scholars have noted how important the officer’s role is in “shaping the conditions under which prisoners live” (Edney, 1997, p. 289) (See also Aguilera, 1990, and Jurick, 1985).

Other research has explored officer attitudes towards their work and towards inmates; but these studies were conducted in the late 1980s, prior to the introduction of case management. However there are parallels in their findings and the outcomes from the ICAC’s interviews. A research paper by Porritt (1988) about New South Wales prisons revealed that high levels of security impacted negatively on officer relationships with inmates. Inmate stress was attributed to a lack of information about prison rules or programs that would be of assistance to them. Results from the ICAC interviews reveal that inmates do feel disempowered and that those officers who are more concerned with custodial and authority issues appear to have negative views about inmates.

In 1987 the NSW DCS Research and Statistics Division reported on a three-prison comparison of prison officer attitudes to their work. One of the correctional centres in the study was Bathurst, where, as has been previously described, unit management had been implemented (McLennan et al., 1987). Under unit management, inmates lived and worked
in smaller groups than was previously the case. The attitudes of these officers were compared with officers from the other two sites. The findings relevant to case management were that officers and inmates at Bathurst had a more positive attitude toward each other than did those at the other two correctional centres, the environment was seen as more relaxed, and there was an increased sense of personal security. This was thought to be for several key reasons: mainly that officers and inmates got to know each other better through more frequent and improved communication. Responses from officers and inmates for the current research generally reflect these findings.

An early forerunner to the current case management process for reception inmates was a pilot program initially trialled for three months in 1987 at one centre. This program was very successful in alleviating new inmates’ worries and stress about being taken into custody, which had been a particular problem. Three officers were specially trained and seconded to the program. The program was so well received by inmates that it was extended and another officer was trained. It was meeting a number of identified needs. Inmates were being given information and being treated as human beings, and officers were recognised as doing an important job. Their secondment and special training were public symbols of this.

Unfortunately, there were unanticipated problems involving other officers’ attitudes to these four, who were labelled as “interfering outsiders who are not doing real prison officers’ work” (Porritt, 1988, p. 85). This is a stark example of the strong culture in which officers are enmeshed and which actively works against someone trying to do anything perceived to be ‘different’. Nonetheless, the reception program for inmates has evolved considerably and is now part of an integrated program of case management. All custodial officers are now trained in and required to implement case management, including at reception centres. They have received pay rises to do so. However, not all officers do. Some indicated that they had more interest in the security aspect of the job than in case management. Other researchers have noted that some officers have a ‘custody orientation’ to their work and display a number of common characteristics. For example, they are more likely to be interested in the security aspect of their job, more dissatisfied with their job than officers with a different orientation, rely on discipline and authority, and hold negative attitudes towards inmates (Walters, 1995).

The introduction of case management has probably had more of an impact on the role of the officer and their relationships with inmates than any other policy decision. Instead of having little interaction with inmates, as was previously the case, under case management, an officer is now expected to communicate regularly with a small number of inmates for whom he or she has responsibility as a case officer. This communication is both formal and informal: that is, when seeing the inmate in the yard or otherwise during the course of duty, and also by interviewing the inmate on a one-to-one basis at least once a month. Interviews serve several purposes, but particularly they are to ensure that the inmate has no foreseeable or current problems that they cannot deal with, and to otherwise advise the inmate as appropriate or answer any questions. Interviews are also used to give positive and negative feedback to inmates about their progress.

Vardon (1997), a former Director-General, Department of Correctional Services in South Australia, has asserted the importance of staff feeling part of any new approach to inmate management, particularly in relation to reducing recidivism. However, in interview responses for this research several officers commented on the high rate of recidivism and what they perceived to be their lack of ability to make any difference – case management or not. It was not because they lacked faith in case management per se, it seemed to be more that they were frustrated at inmates’ lack of commitment to not reoffend, and to meaningfully engage in the process of rehabilitation. Officers thought that inmates participated in case management because that was the only way they could have their level of classification reduced. In their opinion, case management would really make no difference to the rate of recidivism. Many of the inmates would return anyway.

At this point, the findings of a Canadian study are relevant, as they reveal some positive and some not so positive aspects of the complexity of prison life and how difficult it is to foster an environment in which change can occur. The province of Saskatchewan, already using case management, reorganised inmate custody in its correctional centres. Part of this reorganisation included structurally changing cellblocks into a unit living environment where inmates live in 40-bed community-like facilities, with their own laundry and kitchen facilities, shops and classrooms. The change was brought about in order to enhance inmates’ responsibility for themselves and thus to make their return to the wider community less problematic. It meant changes for officers too. They no longer sat outside the locked cell blocks, separated from the inmates. Now their offices were inside the units, and officers and inmates were expected to interact much more frequently. Case management continued to be used.

Under the new arrangements several positive changes were noted in inmate-staff relationships. For example, dynamic security was enhanced because “staff know and understand inmates better. They also feel more secure with this knowledge” (Aguilera, 1990, p. 87). Discipline charges against inmates were considerably reduced. Training of staff was a feature of the transition. New staff were also trained in case management and experienced staff were provided with a refresher course. Concerns about the changes dissipated as time passed and everyone became more familiar with the new system. Other positives included increased job satisfaction among officers. An important disadvantage was trying to implement the new system while still living in the old cell block facilities. The old architecture symbolised maintenance of the old system and values. At the time of writing the article there still was an element of the “old inmate code” (p. 87).

What is the relevance for New South Wales in this? There are a number of parallels and lessons for New South Wales in the Saskatchewan experience. The concept of unit living seems to be broadly comparable to some arrangements in New South Wales centres where inmates live in smaller units or groups. The difficulties experienced in Saskatchewan in trying to move to a new system while still physically in an old building are comparable to a number of older centres in New South Wales. In these places case management has been...
The impact of the old-style officer culture has been known for some time. The research has revealed the tendency of officers to rely on their authority, their generally negative views of inmates, and their antagonism towards non-custodial staff (Hill, 1988; Walters, 1995; Williams, 1983; Wortley, 1987). In order to try to explore why officers retain these attitudes one study explored the premise that insecurity and fear on the part of officers had a direct bearing on whether or not they had a custodial or humanitarian orientation to inmates (Ben-David, Sifion & Cohen, 1996). This is an important issue, given that case management, and other similar inmate management techniques, require officers to adopt a more humanitarian attitude. What they found was that officer insecurity was related to personal safety concerns, and that job or professional insecurity was also a major factor. Officers saw moves to a more humanitarian style of inmate management as erosion of their professional status and as a lack of support and betrayal by the bureaucracy (p. 96). Incidental and 'off-the-record' comments from a number of the officers in the current research reflect these findings.

Notwithstanding these particular issues, putting officers in the role of case officer as well as having them retain their custodial responsibilities creates a contradictory situation for them. Officers are fully aware that they are still responsible for discipline and custodial tasks, like searching cells and inmates, and confiscating items. Given the nature of their work and the volatile environment in which they operate, it is not surprising that many officers retain allegiance to aspects of the 'old' custodial culture, which in turn, impacts negatively on inmates as well as those who are trying to become part of the 'new order' of officers.

A further aspect of the contradiction occurs as a result of officer status within the hierarchy of the prison. Officers have not been considered 'professional' by conventional management standards, however current trends are towards 'professionalising' their role. Attracting officers with higher levels of education is associated with attempts to give the service a more professional reputation. In the United States for example, this has been happening since the late 1960s (Jurik, 1985). But in New South Wales officers generally do not have the formal educational qualifications commensurate with 'professional' status. Officers know this and some are resentful of the status accorded staff who have professional qualifications, but who do not have the added constraints of custodial responsibilities, for example, counsellors, and psychologists. The traditional means of officers reinforcing their status has been through the authority (not the professional status) that is conferred on them by the system, including maintaining a social distance from inmates. When officers perceive that 'the system' is giving inmates some status (and for some officers case management does that) the natural assumption is that the officer's own status is being eroded from both below (inmates) and above (management or other 'professionals'). Rather than facilitating interaction between the inmates and officers, case management is then seen by some officers as a threat to their authority and hence their refusal to participate in it.

This research indicates that initial training for the introduction of case management in New South Wales appears to have been at best haphazard. Officers' perceptions are that there was a distinct lack of management commitment to and allocation of resources for training people properly in case management. The message this sent to officers was that case management was not important and it has had a major and lasting impact on its implementation. In each of the centres visited for the research, the old strong culture of inmate-officer tension still exists underneath the system of case management, albeit to a much greater degree in some centres than others.

These attitudes will not change until officers receive training that will provide them with conceptual understanding as well as practical knowledge about case management, its intention and its application. This current research suggests that lack of training, lack of understanding, and fears about their status are the main reasons why some officers are unwilling to participate in case management. Some studies have noted that higher levels of education and being more career-oriented are associated with officers having a more human services or positive approach to their role (Jurik, 1985; Walters, 1995).

Despite the new role for officers, recruitment policies and practices over the years in New South Wales have changed little, despite the need for a different type of officer than was required a decade ago. One study reported that, at one time, Corrective Services in New South Wales actually curtailed recruiting people with scores at the higher end of or better than the normal range on a particular test (Paterson, 1988 citing Bullard, undated).
CASE MANAGEMENT TODAY

WHAT IS IT AND WHERE HAS IT COME FROM?

The DCS succinctly defines case management as:

...a personalised interactive approach to the management of inmates in custody. (NSW DCS Operations Procedures Manual, 1997, Section 17.4)

It’s focus is on inmates as individuals, with corrections officers having responsibility for overseeing a small number of inmates in order to provide support and assistance, and to record the inmate’s progress in the case file. The file is used by the system to provide information about and evidence of the inmate’s progress in addressing their offending behaviour and their suitability for access to programs, services and privileges. It is also used to assess suitability for a reduction in security classification and parole.

In the last decade, various forms of case management have been adopted as one aspect of a particular view about how correctional centres should be managed. It is useful to look at some definitions of case management as they all emphasise the individualised focus of the process. The similarity of some of these may be a function of the dearth of available research on the topic, resulting in some using others as a point of reference. For example, the New South Wales Inmate Case Management Policy has adopted as part of its definition the first part of the definition used by the Case Management Society of Australia. Both of these definitions imply that case management will operate in an environment of limited resources and funds. The NSW Inmate Case Management Policy (1998c) defines case management as:

...a collaborative, multi-disciplinary process which assesses, plans, implements, co-ordinates, monitors and evaluates options and services to meet an individual’s needs through communication and available resources to promote quality cost effective outcomes. (Inmate Case Management Policy, 1998).

The Case Management Society of Australia (CMSA), which, until now, has focused on health and medical fields, has a general definition which is not specific to those disciplines, and reminds us of resource and budget constraints. It reads:

Case management is a collaborative, multidisciplinary process which assesses, plans, implements, co-ordinates, monitors and evaluates options and services to meet an individual’s needs through communication and available resources to promote quality cost effective outcomes (CMSA, 1998).

The South Australia Department of Corrections defines it as:

The individualised and planned management of offenders based on assessed need, implementation of case plans and progress reviews (SA DCS Strategic Services document, 1998).

The Queensland definition reads:

Case management is a process to address the individual needs of a prisoner by translating the sentence plan into specific intervention and management strategies and assigning responsibilities for the implementation of these strategies (Queensland Corrective Services Commission, 1995).

In the United States, the authors of one text on case management in corrections define it as:

...a systematic process by which identified needs and strengths of offenders are matched with selected services and resources of corrections ... both a systemic model of offender behavior change and an integrative structure for service delivery (Ensor & Southern, 1999, pp. 1, 2).

As noted above, across disciplines, the individualised focus of case management is what is important. Another positive aspect which has been noted is that case management improves communication between service providers and front line staff, which in turn improves services to clients (Godley, Godley, Pratt & Wallace, 1994). These features have been recognised by inmates, management, and academics as vital to corrections (for example see Parker-Jimenez, 1997; Toch, 1996; Vardon, 1997). Whatever the field, use of the term ‘case management’ presumes a model of person management that contains a number of common elements. These are:

- each person is treated as an individual rather than as part of a group
- case management programs are structured around individual needs
- programs contain clear, achievable goals
- goal achievement is rewarded by the system
- positive behaviours are expected in order to achieve goals
- each person has input into their program
- face-to-face contact between individuals and their case officer is frequent and considered important
- helping the person prepare to re-enter the community is a priority
- client-staff ratios are high
- clients get support in various ways, for example in education, vocational training, counselling and treatment
- there is an emphasis on trying to anticipate or circumvent problems rather than waiting until they develop into something serious
It appears that case management became widely accepted as a better way of managing the many problems associated with the de-institutionalisation of people with chronic illness or disabilities who were released from long-term institutional care into more integrated community environments (Enos & Southern, 1996). Case management has also been used with adults and adolescents with psychological problems, or problems related to addiction (Godley, et al., 1994; Martin, & Scarpetti, 1993), in education (Reid, Bailey-Dempsey, Cain, Cook, & Burchard, 1994), and corrections. It is clear then that the use of case management has gained acceptance across a number of disciplines as a method of managing individuals with specific needs, rather than dealing with groups of people with similar needs.

In terms of prison environments, various forms of case management have been adopted in the last decade as one aspect of a particular view about how inmates should be managed. Contemporary views about prison management emphasise more humane treatment of inmates and reducing recidivism through rehabilitation and reintegration into society. As previously mentioned, change in the discourse and language of prison management has accompanied this shift.

**CASE MANAGEMENT IN NEW SOUTH WALES CORRECTIONAL CENTRES**

Case management in New South Wales’s correctional centres is an integrated system of inmate management encompassing the key elements of:

- Reception, screening and induction
- Case planning
- Security classification and placement
- Case work
- Pre-release supervision

(NSW DCS Inmate Management Policy, 1998)

Post-release supervision is also included in the Policy as part of the 'throughcare' of inmates, but as yet this aspect of case management is still at the discussion stage.

Case management is part of the Area Management system which "is designed to enhance dynamic security and ensure interactive inmate management" (Area and Case Management, New South Wales Department of Corrective Services Academy, Trainee Manual, undated, circa 1994, p. 7). In summary, case management attempts to steer inmates into addressing their offending behaviour - the key strategy for rehabilitation and reducing recidivism.

The following is a brief sketch of how case management should work in New South Wales correctional centres. At the time of this research, case management appears to be working well in some centres and not in others. A factor that may influence this is that the procedure for case management is still in a state of 'transition' (and perhaps confusion) from the original process and its related terminology, to a more recent one that was introduced in the first half of 1996. For example, the newer process is described in Section 17 of the Operations and Procedures Manual, which was last updated in November 1996. The Manual is under review. The most recent Inmate Classification and Placement Manual, which describes the procedures for case management, was last issued in July 1994. It contains some information that is no longer applicable. This Manual is currently being rewritten. The most up-to-date document is a new Inmate Management Policy which was released in July 1998.

The confusion regarding case management is easy to understand, and becomes evident when talking to officers and inmates. For example, both groups still talk about 'program pathways' and Program Review Committees (PRCs) which were part of the original process. In changes that were not merely a shift in jargon, program pathways have been superseded by case plans and PRCs by Case Management Teams. An important part of the original process was the role of the Case Officer in assisting the inmate to develop a program pathway. Now the Case Management Team develops case plans, not program pathways, and the officer’s role is to oversee the implementation of the case plan rather than develop it. This change was brought about because it was thought that officers were not trained for assessing inmate needs, nor did they have enough knowledge about which services and programs were available.

For the purposes of this research, when officers and inmates refer to PRCs and ‘classo’ it is taken that they are referring to the Case Management Team. The Case Management Committee is a ratifying body which reviews the placement and classification recommendations of the Case Management Team. Also, when inmates and officers talk about the Case Management Supervisor, they are referring to the Case Manager.

The NSW DCS Inmate Case Management Policy (1998c) describes the aims and objectives of the case management process. In summary, the basic administrative structure of case management is shown in the following figure.

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\*Dynamic security refers to all the aspects of security that are not physically part of the correctional centre. For example, intelligence information and reduction of assaults would be part of dynamic security, whereas gates and electronic surveillance would not.
As noted above, in the case management system correctional officers are called Case Officers, and have a number of inmates whom they case manage. This is referred to as the officer’s case load and varies from only managing one inmate to managing as many as twelve or more. The case load depends on the ratio of officers to inmates in a given area.

Each inmate has a case file which should provide a good overview of the inmate from health and education needs through to day-to-day notes about their life in custody. The file extensively documents progression through their sentence, including comments on such things as behaviour, attitudes, problems, and achievement of goals. The case officer, or anyone else who has contact with an inmate, enters relevant notes on the file. The case officer also observes inmates in the yard and wing and makes notes in the file about significant events, both positive and negative. Notes should be factual and not contain third party information. The case file moves with the inmate. Movement of the file for any reason should be logged whenever it is taken from its usual place to any other part of a correctional centre, or to another centre. Some centres have ‘sign out’ registers that are to be completed by anyone who takes a case file out of the filing cabinet, including the case officer. Other centres do not enforce this strategy.

The case file is started within a few hours of the inmate being taken into custody, when the process of completing the Reception, Screening and Induction reports commences. These reports then become part of the case management file. They contain important information about the inmate’s health, emotional and/or psychological problems, and tendency for self-harm. They also alert officers to any particular issues relating to the need for the inmate to be considered ‘at risk’ (put on protection), segregated, or dealt with as an escapee. This information stays on the case file and is referred to whenever an inmate is moved within a prison or to another prison, or has a change of case officer. This is probably the most often read section of the file because of the potential harm that can come to an inmate if the proper duty of care is not taken. In some centres, it seems that this is the only aspect of case management that has been properly implemented. Indeed one officer commented that case management at his centre appeared to have become nothing more than reception interviews for ‘alerts’.

A Case Manager oversees a number of case officers and checks that the case file notes are up-to-date for the regular meetings of parole committees, the Case Management Team and the Case Management Committee. The inmate’s case file is used by each of these groups to assess the inmate’s suitability for progression in the system. Its contents are taken as factual and true. It is the most important document in the system for the inmate and it governs what happens to them throughout their custody, a situation of which inmates and custodial officers are very aware. Consequently, its contents are a source of interest, concern, and often mystery to inmates, as most reported they had never had the opportunity to look at it.

As well as informally observing the inmate in the yard and wing, the officer should call the inmate for a one-to-one interview once per month. In this interview they discuss how the
inmate is coping with life in custody, progressing with their program, and what, if any, problems they are having. The officer’s role is to assist the inmate in taking responsibility for as much of their life in custody as possible. Alternatively, if the inmate is not attending to their offending behaviour, has a bad attitude, or is behaving inappropriately in some other way, this is noted in the file. For example, if one inmate is ‘standing over’ another inmate, the officer makes it clear that this will be recorded in the file, that the behaviour needs to cease and the change noted in the file, otherwise the inmate’s classification will be affected. The legislation requires that each inmate’s classification be reviewed at least once in every six month period, so most inmates take these issues very seriously.

When working ideally, case management forces inmates to participate in programs because the case file is the document used by the CMT and the CMC to assess inmate status. Inmates must demonstrate that they are addressing their offending behaviour. By participating in case management this can be achieved and thus a lower classification granted. Being given a lower classification leads to a number of advantages, some of which are: less intense scrutiny by officers; more freedom of movement within a correctional centre; moving to a lower security institution; more time out of the cell; more privileges; access to work release programs; release to attend TAFE; and weekend release. Participation in case management is, therefore, the inmate’s path to these things. The contents of the inmate’s case file are taken as demonstrating the inmate’s attempts to ‘do the right thing’.

In general, the Case Officer’s role is to be a point of contact or referral for the inmate should they have a problem, need advice or information, or to talk to someone. Previously, an inmate would have to approach any officer, who may or may not have been predisposed to listen or assist. Under case management, the officer and inmate establish a situation whereby the officer knows the inmate’s history, and understands why a service or advice is being sought. Because the Case Officer gets to know the inmate, he or she can, if needed, help sort out small problems before they become big problems, or anticipate where problems might arise. Serious problems can flare up very quickly in a custodial environment.

The process for the Case Officer to get to know the inmate is that when the inmate arrives at a correctional centre, the Case Officer reads the case file to get some background about the inmate. If the inmate is new to the system, the officer helps the inmate to get started in following their case plan which sets goals whereby the inmate can demonstrate they are addressing their offending behaviour. These goals take into consideration any comments made during sentencing. For example, if the offence was alcohol-related, the comments may make it mandatory for the inmate to attend alcohol and other drug counselling before being considered for a reduction in classification. Depending on the inmate’s needs, a case plan might also include such things as attending certain education courses, or an anger management course, seeing a psychologist, or developing skills to assist with employment chances after release. If a plan already exists, the officer can give the inmate information and assistance to continue it.

Not every inmate will have a detailed case plan. For example, some inmates do not have specific needs relating to their offending behaviour that should be addressed, e.g. addiction or anger management problems. In these instances, case management amounts to the case officer speaking regularly with the inmate to ensure there are no problems, and recording the outcome in the case file.

**CASE MANAGEMENT IN CORRECTIONS IN OTHER AUSTRALIAN STATES AND NEW ZEALAND**

Case management is currently in use in Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia as well as New South Wales. The Northern Territory, Western Australia and Tasmania do not use case management. Australian Capital Territory (ACT) offenders currently serve their sentences in New South Wales correctional centres. New Zealand is preparing to introduce case management into their corrections system some time mid-1999.

The structures and procedures by which case management is administered differ in each of the states that use it. It is at the site of individual service delivery where there is the most commonality. That is, each system that uses case management includes having one officer responsible for a small number of inmates whom they assist and monitor. Case files feed into offender management and classification.

**South Australia**

In South Australia, case management is in its infancy and is seen as the key strategy for improving services to inmates. It is also considered to be a cost effective way of achieving this. Most correctional centres introduced case management in the first half of 1998.

There are several differences between the South Australian system and that in New South Wales. For example, inmates in South Australia can opt not to participate in case management. Another difference is that the South Australian system has been structured so that inmate programs are tailored to the length of sentence of the inmate.

**Victoria**

Victoria has 13 prisons in its system, ten public and three private. The Victorian system of corrections is unique in Australia, and is reputed to be the most privatised in the world (Editorial, The Age, 1998, p. 8). The system, its management, and the provision of services are a complex multi-layered series of public and private providers. The three private correctional centres house 70% of female and nearly half the male inmate population. The mix of public and private providers makes the control and regulation of systems and services within the institutions more difficult than would otherwise be the case. Allied services that support case management have also been contracted out, for example, health, education, and psychology.
Queensland

Queensland also has a corporatised system of corrections. Of their thirteen correctional centres, two are privately operated. Overall, the case management of inmates is not dissimilar to New South Wales, and this feeds well into their system of sentence management.

Inmate access to their case files is more structured in Queensland than in New South Wales as there is a list of specified documents to which inmates can have ready access. Access to any other documents is only available through Freedom of Information legislation (FOI).

While the day to day management of inmates occurs at each correctional centre, the Office of Sentence Management in Queensland is the body that centrally monitors and approves programs for inmates and other inmate management initiatives. In New South Wales each centre has committees to make these decisions.

Western Australia

Case management has never really been implemented in any of the 13 prisons in WA. Instead, a unit management system is used where inmates are housed in groups with the same group of officers overseeing them on a daily basis. No one officer is responsible for particular inmates. If the inmate has any needs or problems they approach any officer in the unit.

Security classification is undertaken centrally by a team of custodial officers. This ensures a consistency of approach. Subsequent to a classification review, a full decision report should be made available to the inmate explaining the reasons for the decision and the information that was taken into consideration at the time. Inmates can appeal and ask to have a decision reviewed. This is an option taken up by many inmates.

In terms of access to files, any officer can put things in the inmate’s file, but inmates can only access them through FOI.

New Zealand

There is no standard system of case management in place in the 17 New Zealand prisons. The role of officers is really defined by the practices of the institution where they are located. Mostly however, officers perform security driven ‘lock-up’ tasks. Involvement in any programs for inmates for rehabilitation arises from the interest and initiative of the individual officer, and the policies of each corrections site, rather than centrally-driven policy.

The difficulties with this system have been recognised and planning and preparation for a complete restructure is at an advanced stage. Currently a team of academics is assisting with the development of a two-pronged approach to inmate management: first, targeting programs to responsive inmates, and second, more humane containment. That is, providing a safer and more humane environment for inmates, including access to literacy and numeracy programs, health and other education opportunities. The suite of programs that is being developed for the new system will provide a platform for case management. A lot of research is being undertaken in order to ensure that the officer training that is developed for administering case management is thorough and practical. As a corollary, changes to recruitment policies and the training of new officers are also in the pipeline. The pivotal nature of the case officer’s role in a case management environment is well understood and appreciated. It is planned that the new system should be ready to be implemented toward the end of 1999.
HOW THIS RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED – AN OVERVIEW

This exploratory research project had two distinct parts. The first involved undertaking literature searches in order to learn about the history of case management and its use in today’s correctional settings, both within Australia and elsewhere. The second was a series of structured interviews with a number of inmates and custodial officers in nine New South Wales correctional centres. These were conducted in the first half of 1998. The purpose of the interviews was to explore inmates’ and officers’ perceptions of how case management was operating in their centres. The centres visited for the interviews were chosen as representative of the different types of correctional centres.

THE INTERVIEWS

A total of 77 structured interviews were conducted (37 officers and 40 inmates). A senior DCS manager involved in case management accompanied the researcher on each of the visits. This provided an opportunity for a representative of management to hear directly from inmates what they thought about how case management is working. This subject had not previously been specifically discussed with New South Wales inmates. No literature was found about this kind of research in Australia or elsewhere. In this context, it could be observed that the ICAC seems to have undertaken an important and rather groundbreaking piece of work, which provides some important insights into the conduct of case management in the New South Wales correctional setting.

Inmates to be interviewed were randomly selected at each centre. Officers were randomly selected from those available on the day. All those who were selected, both inmates and officers, agreed to participate. Great care was taken to ensure that prospective interviewees clearly understood what the research was about and that they had a choice about participating.

A similar but different interview schedule was developed for inmates and for officers. Interviews took between twenty and forty-five minutes to conduct. Verbatim responses were hand recorded by the researcher as closely as possible to the interviewees’ own words, and as related specifically to the question. Inmates and officers often spoke at length about particular issues when answering questions.

Inmates and officers appeared to talk freely and honestly about their views. The reliability of their responses is supported by the consistency with which certain key issues arose, across correctional centres, and classification levels of the inmates. Reliability of the officer data is further supported by the kinds of issues that arose in other discussions with different DCS officers, where the researcher attended a day of refresher training for first class custodial officers. The issues raised by the group were very similar to those that emerged in the officers’ interviews.

The following two sections report on inmate and officer responses, and quotations are frequently used to illustrate key issues. Thus, the use of respondents’ own words, such as ‘screws’ and ‘crims’, and other terms which some might find offensive, is a faithful reflection of the responses of those interviewed.

The Respondent Number, given in parentheses after each quotation, has been randomly assigned to each completed interview schedule. Assigning Respondent Numbers is an accepted method of presenting verbal research data. It enables individual responses to be traced to a particular interview schedule.
This section of the report discusses inmates’ responses in general terms. Each text box highlights the response given most often by inmates to that question.

**INMATE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CASE MANAGEMENT**

Most inmates were aware of case management at their centre. Inmates from two correctional centres were unsure whether case management was operating in their centre or not.

**WHAT CASE MANAGEMENT MEANS TO INMATES**

Being able to sort out problems and provide support.

When asked what case management meant to them, the type of response given most often by inmates was that it helps them to sort out problems and provides support. Almost half the inmates mentioned these types of issues. Other types of responses given were that case management gives inmates a specific officer they can report to, and it helps inmates work their way through the system/make plans.

A number of inmates felt that case management did nothing for them or that it did not work. Others mentioned that it provided information to officers about inmates. Only two inmates out of forty said they did not know what case management was.

What inmates thought about case management is evident in the following examples of their comments:

It helps to sort out problems/provides support.

**CASE MANAGEMENT MEANS TO INMATES**

They talk to you and see how you’re going, see if you’ve got any dramas, things like that. (Respondent 35)

You can talk about problems, helps you to see people, the psychologist, etc. Depends on the officer you’ve got, some can’t be bothered, some don’t care. (Respondent 14)

Someone’s looking out for me while I’m here. (Respondent 17)

Gives inmates a specific officer to report to

Get a case officer to guide you, help you. Doesn’t happen here. Most people don’t know who their case officer/manager is. (Respondent 20)

The way I see it, if I’ve got a problem I can take it to the one who’s looking after my case file. (Respondent 36)

Helps you work your way through the system/make plans

My future. I don’t want to come back. Case management should be helping me get ready for outside. Someone who’s going to be there and go in to bat for you. Setting out a plan, going through it and the officer helping you through it. Security of the jail is important too. When we want to change (our behaviour) we can’t, but the officers don’t (change theirs) – some don’t care. (Respondent 19)

A formality done by officers, for classification purposes. But if you get a good case officer and he sits you down, he can steer you through what you need to do to get on in your time. The Classification Committee pays attention to certain things and you need to know what is the best thing to do. Case officers here are lazy. I went to the wing officer because my case officer wouldn’t help, the case officer was furious. (Respondent 3)

Case management does nothing for me/doesn’t work

I think personally it’s a bunch of nonsense. Most of them aren’t trained. At ... they gave me a 21 year old girl. I’m not going to relate to her. For some inmates who have been abused by males before jail, they give them male case officers and expect them to be able to talk to them. (Respondent 37)

Nothing much, doesn’t work. I’m not really sure. I thought it was to have a better relationship with officers and inmates. On the one hand you have an officer who wants to put you in trouble for any little thing, and then you’re supposed to talk to him and tell him your problems. (Respondent 33)

**THE BEST THING ABOUT CASE MANAGEMENT**

It gives inmates a specific officer to report to that they trust.
When asked what they thought was the best thing about case management, the most frequently given responses focused on having a specific officer they trust to talk to, help them and explain things. Several inmates mentioned the benefits of having a structure in which to set and achieve goals and progress through the system. A substantial number of inmates, over one-third, said there was nothing good about case management, or they did not know what the best thing was about it. Examples of inmate comments illustrate these issues.

Someone to trust/talk to/help/explain things

- Gives you a reference point. (Respondent 4)
- My case officer is showing me he's human, the blue/green barrier is gone. Gives me encouragement. Shows me dignity. Opens the recycling door. Can talk to him if he's genuine. (Respondent 19)
- Gives you someone to talk to. You don't know if you're going to be alive tomorrow. (Respondent 24)
- Someone to talk to, who's interested in you. (Respondent 39)

Setting goals/progressing through the system

- Goal setting, plans, achieving them. (Respondent 9)
- Helps you and betters you to progress through the system. (Respondent 23)

Nothing is good about case management

- Don't know. After all these years, I don't think there's anything good about it. Others might have got some benefit from it. (Respondent 1)
- If it worked it would be great. Things would be in order if it was managed and done properly. (Respondent 18)

When asked what they thought the worst thing was about case management, a range of issues was raised by inmates. The two most commonly raised problems concerned the officer's role and aspects of the case management process, for example, when the officer does not want to be involved in case management or does not like the inmate. Also raised was the basic issue of inmates having to talk to officers at all. For some this is a real problem. When in custody, talking to officers can be considered a serious breach of inmate culture and serious repercussions can occur. Other issues raised concerned more general aspects of the case management process. A number of inmates made strong statements about the lack of confidentiality of the information given to officers or in the file. Inmates' responses indicate that they want more input into the process and to know more about file contents. Conversely, five inmates said there were few problems with case management. The following are some examples of inmate comments about these issues:

The case officer doesn't want to do case management/does not like the inmate

- If the case officer's heart isn't in the case management system. If he's not participating in the spirit of the case management system. (Respondent 4)
- Frustrating when you can't get them to do something you need, e.g. four months to see a psychologist and then I got tipped (moved) down to .... (Respondent 14)
- Blokes being off-side with the case officer, or the screw doesn't like the inmate. Then they write crook stuff about you, or won't go and see you, then you have problems with classification. (Respondent 22)

It's a problem having to talk to an officer

- Talking to the officer doesn't look good. (Respondent 2)
- It's very hard to relate to a case officer. The case officers are into control. When you're in jail as long as me, you try to please them. They're not your friends. It's very difficult, if you don't talk to them they write down that you're not co-operative! (Respondent 7)

There is no confidentiality/privacy

- Someone can open up your file and know things about you that you don't want them to know. (Respondent 9)

There needs to be more inmate input
Inmates were asked if they thought having more input into their case management would make any difference. Overwhelmingly the response was 'yes'.

Having more input would make a difference

As long as we can have our say and put over what we want if we've done something wrong or right, as long as we can have a say. (Respondent 6)

Yes. Especially the file – debating stuff on there. (11)

If they did it (case management) properly it would. (Respondent 40)

Having more input would not make any difference

Your own progress through the system is based on your case management. If you have a good case officer, it is difficult enough. If you don't have a case officer that you get on with, it makes it even worse. Once you realise in jail the only one you can control is yourself, once you realise that, you just go above them and sort it out for yourself. (Respondent 7)

Only got self-control to all we've got. Some prisoners would abuse it. (Respondent 19)

We put views across all the time, but nothing happens. It took us a long time to have a football game – for Christ's sake, and there's an oval here. We should be there every day. It's too hard here. They take stuff off people all the time. They can't have it both ways - take TVs and jugs away when the blokes have nothing. There's so many little things, when a person's locked up. When they search your cell, everything's upside down, and that's our home. Case management's too hard when one minute they're doing that stuff and then want us to be friends. I don't know who the Governor is here - never seen him, wouldn't even know his name. (Respondent 40)

Inmates nominated a range of things they would change about case management, if given the opportunity. Most of these concerned case officers. For example, some said inmates should keep the same case officer while at a correctional centre. Others said case officers should be more available, see inmates more regularly, or generally have more contact with them. Better training for case officers was also raised, as was inmates being able to see their case files. Several inmates said that case officers should not be custodial officers, but other members of staff.

Inmate Access to their Case Officers

- Nearly all inmates have a case officer
- For most inmates, their case officer or another officer informed them who that would be

As case management is the DCS's primary inmate management tool, inmates were asked whether or not they had a case officer and how they found out who that person was. More than two-thirds of the interviewed inmates said they do have a case officer. Just under one-third said they either did not have one, or did not know if they had one. The most common way inmates found out about their case officer was when the case officer or another officer told them. A number of inmates said they were proactive and found out for themselves who their case officer was.

How soon inmates are told about their case officer seems to vary considerably. For some inmates it happens at reception, or within a reasonable period of time. For others it takes quite a while. The following comments illustrate this point:

- "Gave me one over the table at reception. At ... we used to have an inmate take inmates on a tour of the jail, show them where things are and explain case management too. Don't do that anymore. Inmate Development Committee has gone by the wayside - I used to chair it." (Respondent 7)

- "Called me up, about 5-6 months after I got here. I've never gone to a case officer and asked for anything. Nothing they can do for me that another officer can't do." (Respondent 10)

- "Case officer called me up about a week after I got sentenced." (Respondent 16)

- "One day a bloke come up to me and said "I'm your case officer" – about four months after I got here - got sentenced. At the Bay after a couple of days I got told, but here it took yonks, about four months after I got here." (Respondent 10)

- "At reception, told one would be allocated to me. Told me who it was. He asks me from time to time how things are going – about once a fortnight." (Respondent 23)

- "Since coming here in 1989, I've never been informed about who my case officer is." (Respondent 36)

In terms of the 'success' of individual correctional centres in informing inmates about their case officer, there were four centres where all the interviewed inmates said they had a case officer. Responses at other centres were mixed. In some instances inmates were new to the wing or correctional centre and had not yet been told about a case officer.
Inmates were very positive about it being ‘a good thing’ to have a case officer and commented quite extensively about it. Almost all inmates said something positive, even though some had criticism too. Their comments are quite revealing about how they feel about relating to a case officer, and illustrate other aspects of the custodial culture. There is no doubt that, given a choice, inmates prefer to have one officer to relate to rather than having to speak to any officer who happens to be available at the time.

It's good having a case officer but it shouldn't be a screw. Doesn’t look right inmates talking to screws. You're in an office with the door shut talking to a screw. Look's real bad you know. (Respondent 2)

It's a good thing, provided the inmate gets along with that officer. I like to speak to my case officer before I go to classification. But this time I didn't get the chance. Have they said ‘good day’ to you on the way past and that's it! Should be called in properly and asked how you're going. (Respondent 3)

Good in a way, but hard at times - don't know if they'll keep it confidential. My mate told the case officer something and he went back and told. The case officer calls you up and asks if you have any problems. I keep a lot of things to myself - just some people I can talk to and some I can't. (Respondent 5)

Good. Helps the boys out real good. (Respondent 12)

Good thing. If you have problems with other inmates and they get on with the case officer, they can trust them and tell them. About 60% of officers you can trust. (Respondent 15)

Good. Lot of us over the years got a bad reputation through the system. This breaks down the barriers - I want to lose that reputation and this is the way to do that. I can talk to them and they can see I'm trying to make amends for past stuff-ups. (Respondent 16)

There's always that line between inmates and officers. If other inmates see you talking to an officer, that's a big problem. Needs a better structure, e.g. make a time to see the officer where it's private, treat you like a human being. (Respondent 20)

Officers probably not very happy to talk to us and really don't want to do it. Probably a good idea, but if you know your way round the system - officers don't really seem to know what's expected of us - neither do inmates. No one's really explained it to us. (Respondent 22)

It seems you having 20 different officers - one person to talk to, but if you get 'Robocop', very militarised, he might pick on you. It doesn't work, doesn't help anyone. We're supposed to be developing communications. You can use your conflict resolution skills, if you play the smiling face, you're seen as a manipulator; if you speak your mind, you're aggressive. Case management is supposed to be personal, but officers abuse it here. They want information. Case officers are not professional staff. I don't have a screw problem. (Respondent 26)

It's very important for an inmate to 'get on' with their case officer and not to get on their 'wrong side'.

Being able to 'get on' with the case officer was something nearly all the inmates agreed was important. But it creates a dilemma for the inmate: if they are too friendly the officer might think they are being manipulated, or other inmates will think they are informing. If the inmate is not communicative enough or is assertive, the officer might make life more unpleasant for the inmate or put an adverse report on the case file which affects the inmate's classification. As the officer data substantiates, inmates are accurate in saying that officers are very conscious of the possibility of being manipulated by inmates. Inmates commented extensively about the importance of being able to 'get on' with their case officer.

Certainly think it helps. Part of case management plan; can affect your classifications. If you didn't, it would probably hold you back a bit in the system. There's probably a few case officers who wouldn't give a damn anyway. (Respondent 1)

He's got a role to play, but it just doesn't pay to be too charming; he has a role to play. I'd rather he stops a little distant, otherwise other officers think he's favouring you and they'll give you a hard time. (Respondent 4)

Absolutely. He's got to do his paperwork. A lot of inmates don't get on and have problems. (Respondent 7)

Definitely yes. If you don't, you don't go nowhere. I don't get feedback about what they've done for me. Depends who they are. Some have attitudes towards young Aboriginal inmates. They don't treat you like a human being. (Respondent 18)

As long as they treat you like a human being. In ... it was terrible - treat you like an animal. They play games with you, e.g. call your lawyer, hang up the phone when you make a call, don't let you have a shower. (Respondent 27)

Very important. Rapport - you should be able to have, should be able to talk to your case officer. Some inmates really need someone to talk to. (Respondent 32)

It would be [important to get on with them if you have] to talk. You're not going to really talk to someone you don't really like. As ... there was one officer that treated everyone like shit, then expected you to tell him about your family and stuff. (Respondent 35)
Most inmates were very aware of the importance of the type of relationship they have with their case officer. That is, most inmates agreed that it is important not to get on the "wrong side" of a case officer because of the control and authority wielded by the officer over the inmate.

"The crim is his own worst enemy." (Respondent 3)

"Difficult" for them? The type of response given most often by inmates was that they would make life hard for you, try to cause trouble for you. Accuse inmates. Screws might get an inmate who will talk to an officer. There's heaps of jealousy here. The inmates want to see the officer, but they don't think about the bigger picture. The inmates just react, don't seem to be able to see it. They're very basic - the crim is his own worst enemy." (Respondent 3)

Yes. If the case officer doesn't like you, you get absolutely nowhere and he'll work against you. (Respondent 8)

"Getting on" with the case officer could also cause problems for inmates as some of the comments indicate:

If other inmates found out - if you get on with the officer. There's heaps of jealousy here. The inmates make life hard for you, try to cause trouble for you. "Accuse inmates. I've seen a lot of officers stand back and watching; turn a blind eye to things. (Respondent 5)

You can be seen as a dog, or a suck. You'll have no friends, no one will speak to you or help. Screws don't tell you anything. It's the inmates who tell you everything. (Respondent 27)

Unless it's worth it for the inmate. It's us and them. To be seen to be friendly with a screw's not good. (Respondent 38)

Conversely, a number of inmates said they did not think they had to 'please' their case officer.

From what I've seen, blokes say "punch it up your arse - you can't do anything for me". You might get an inmate who'll talk to an officer. You need an officer that cares about doing it [case management]. Like where they tell you they're your case officer - not when they're searching your cell. They should take you aside and do it right. (Respondent 25)

It's not that important to inmates. It's jail. Their reports go to classification. That's probably the only reason that you'd want to please an officer. (Respondent 38)

Dealing with a difficult case officer

Ignore the officer, do nothing, and try to stay out of the officer's way.

Inmates and correctional officers do need to interact for case management to be meaningful. How then, do inmates deal with a case officer whom they think is 'making life difficult' for them? The type of response given most often by inmates was that they would ignore it, do nothing, and try to stay out of the officer's way. A number of inmates said they would employ strategies such as trying to talk to the officer, or a different officer about the problem, or going to a more senior officer.

Having the case officer changed

It is better if inmates don't have to change their case officer.

There are occasions when an inmate will be assigned to a new case officer. The most obvious occasion is when the inmate is transferred to another correctional centre. Half of the interviewed inmates said that being moved to a different correctional centre, or having a change of case officer for any reason, would have a negative impact on their case management. About one-third said that these things would not particularly affect them, or it would depend on circumstances. Of the remainder, some were unsure whether it would impact or not. However, some of these comments indicate less than satisfactory experiences with case management.

Moving to another correctional centre does affect me

It does in a way. If you're used to one person, and then got to go to another one. You get used to talking to one person. Not that you want to talk to them but that's not the point. (Respondent 2)

When you're at a jail and your case officer knows about you, your family problems, etc and can say to another officer, leave him alone, he's having a bad day. New jail, new set of circumstances, and you have to go through the whole thing again; mum's on dialysis, I need new doctor's certificates, etc, etc, every time just to get extra phone calls. (Respondent 3)

In a way, you're allocated an officer at every prison and it'd break that bond. That officer is the only one you could trust. So it would affect. (Respondent 15)

On some occasions, yes. He could've just got to know you. If the case officer didn't get on with you and wrote bad reports, they'd just think you're an idiot straight away. [Because the new officer would read the reports in the file.] (Respondent 34)

Move to another correctional centre doesn't affect me/don't know if it affects me

At ... 4½ years ago, I had five or six case officers. In the end you're not interested anyway. Then to ... I can't remember anyone saying they were my case officer there. (Respondent 1)

Not really affected, basically it's the same; not really a compulsory thing; it's there but it's not put into action that much. You're assigned a case officer, sometimes it takes two months. Up to the inmate then to ask to see someone if they need to. (Respondent 29)

Getting a different case officer does affect me

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An inmate’s case management file is a record of their life in custody, and, as has been previously noted, its contents govern how the Department processes the inmate through the system. Inmates realise this, as is evidenced by their responses. A number of questions arise then about inmate knowledge of the contents of their file and their access to it. DCS policy in this regard is that inmates are permitted supervised access to their files. The inside cover of the white case management file states:

... information contained in this file can be viewed by the inmate concerned under supervision of the Case Officer or appropriate authors.

However, when asked what sorts of things they think go into the file, inmates’ responses clearly indicated that most of them were making educated guesses, or assumptions about file contents, based on experiences. Clearly, a number of the inmates really do not know what the file contains.

Inmates generally do not have access to files and do not realise they are entitled to access.

Thirty-four of the forty inmates have never looked at the contents of their files. Some have asked and been told they can only see it through a Freedom of Information (FOI) application, others have asked and been told they cannot see it, and several others have not asked because they do not want to see it. Of the six who had been able to see it, one said he had briefly seen it, but should not have, i.e. he thought it was unauthorised access, another was only able to see it because he had made an FOI application and had to pay to see certain things, and another had to subpoena his file in order to see it. Inmate comments reveal their views.

No, I’ve not been able to look through my case file.  
I’ve never seen it. I asked but was told I can’t. Another inmate at... saw the file through FOI and was devastated after seeing the running sheets, said there were two options – suicide or move. (Respondent 8)  

Never seen it. Asked the case officer and he said I had to go through FOI. I have to know where I’m going wrong so I can fix it. (Respondent 16)  

I have asked but was told only through FOI, so I’ve got to pay $5 per page and wait three months – secrecy etc. I’ve been told I can see it, but I’m getting the run around at the minute. (Respondent 28)  

No – haven’t seen it. Don’t know the process, probably FOI. I’ve asked, but they’ve really no idea whether I can or can’t. (Respondent 32)
Even though, in reality, inmates generally do not seem to have access to their files, procedures allow them to have things added to it, for example by using a blue Prisoner Application Form, or providing photocopies of a relevant document. However, half the inmates said they do not get the opportunity to add things to their file and one-quarter said they did not know whether they could or not.

**OTHER COMMENTS FROM INMATES**

At the end of the interview inmates were asked if there were any final comments they wished to make. Some did. They cover a range of issues, and, like previous comments, they are revealing about how inmates feel about aspects of life in custody, particularly case management.

- **Case management is not a bad system but it has to be used properly. It’s no good not having uniform use across different jails, or half the officers doing it well and half not interested.** (Respondent 3)

- **Keep it up. It’s creating an air of professionalism in Corrective Services that hasn’t been seen there in the past. Otherwise officers will have a “They will do it our way” attitude. Now case officers have to interact with inmates, see the result with inmates and get kudos from the system for them.** (Respondent 4)

- **Confidentiality is very bad. I was put in a very bad predicament. I mentioned something to my case officer in confidence and that very night the officer about whom I complained came to my door and went berserk at me. I expected my case officer to take it to someone higher and not break confidence. When you are an inmate, you don’t have anywhere to turn really.** (Respondent 5)

- **It gives you more opportunity to sit down and talk, have input into broader jail management. Remissions are gone – there’s no incentive to behave. Half the officers send the inmates up to see us [trusted long term inmates] – the officers don’t want to deal with the problem. They need an intro to psychology course in the Academy for officers to better judge what’s happening. Some have no idea. Case management should be across the jail – not just your own case.** (Respondent 19)

- **You’re locked up for hours and expected to sit there and talk to a screw, but you just can’t. It’s too hard. Even though we’ve done wrong, and deserve to be where we are, you just can’t sit there and be a good mate.** (Respondent 35)

**SUMMARY OF OFFICERS’ INTERVIEW RESPONSES**

In this section officers’ responses are discussed. Text boxes summarise the main points raised in their responses and general observations are made about them.

At the beginning of the interviews officers were asked a number of general questions about case management. These questions were intended to focus officers’ thoughts, particularly on case management in their own correctional centre.

**WHAT DOES CASE MANAGEMENT MEAN TO YOU?**

The first question asked officers what case management meant to them. A large majority, three-quarters, responded that it meant better management of inmates, that it was a way of interacting and/or monitoring them. Others said that case management was part of the job, or that it meant a lot of paper work and writing. Half of the officers had never worked in another centre where case management had been used, meaning that their current placement was where they had first put it into practice.

The following are examples of comments about what case management means to officers.

**Better management and monitoring of inmates.**

- **Better management and monitoring of inmates.**

**Interaction with inmates**

- **Just interaction between officer and inmate.** (Respondent 16)
Monitoring inmates

Monitoring inmates, covering your own area. We’ve done case management for years here – used to get more information than now. (Respondent 19)

More personal monitoring of inmates. (Respondent 22)

A lot of work

Lots of writing. It makes it look like the Department is doing something for prisoners. Now the prisoners have caught on to the game and they get their classes, even though they have to participate in lots of classes. But they do that because they’ve got nothing else to do. (Respondent 13)

Pain in the bum. Get allocated a case load, do the initial interview, start to get a bit of a rapport and they get moved to another wing or jail, and you have to start from scratch again. After a few times you start to get blase about it. (Respondent 34)

Part of the job

Part of the job we’re paid to do at the moment. Mostly reception of inmates.

How well case management is working

Officers were asked how well they thought case management was working in their correctional centre. In summary, over half the officers said that it was not working at all, was not working well, or was only partly working at their centre. Over one-third were more positive saying that case management was working well or very well.

In most cases a variety of responses was given by officers from the same centre. One centre had a more positive response, with two of the interviewed officers saying that case management was working ‘very well’. At two other centres all officers gave the same negative response: that case management was not working or not working well. The point worthy of emphasis is that these two centres were unanimous in their negative view that case management was not working.

The following are some examples of comments from each of the broad categories of responses.

Case management is not working/is not working well

It’s not working very well at all. The standard is to receive information from inmates. May be disguised as doing something for the inmates but that’s secondary. Inmates will only talk to executive staff. Don’t know of any who talk to a two-striper or below about anything that will affect the discipline of the jail. (Respondent 2)

I’ve always had some reservations about it. The behaviour of inmates. The system’s designed to end everyone up in minimum security. If you look at the behaviour of inmates, they may have 4-5 page running sheets and they still get minimum classification. There is a real shortage of reports from IDS [Inmate Development Staff]. As for case management, I don’t think we’re reaching any more inmates than we were 19 years ago. (Respondent 11)
Is working partly

In some ways, but not in others. Inmates tell what they think you want to hear. They realise if they use the D and A [drug and alcohol counsellor/service] and psychologist, etc. that it'll help them. So they're using the system, but while they're there something may click. (Respondent 3)

Is working quite well

Officers in the jail possibly do more case management than any others, i.e. remands. Only in certain areas though, a lot is arse covering. Still that is now called case management and we write it down if the officer is doing the job. A lot try. Others just write something on the file. (Respondent 1)

Pretty good here. Better than the old system. Less assaults on officers and inmates. (Respondent 29)

Is working well/very well

It works well. Gives you clearer insight into what you're dealing with. Case files are used by management effectively. If there is a problem with a prisoner they always have the file there. (Respondent 4)

Very good from a custodial point of view, otherwise we don't even speak to inmates. Here it's minimum security. It's breaking down barriers green/blue. You get a spin-off from interaction and information you receive, for example, problems with another inmate, general intelligence too, and other stuff - a first-time inmate who has a problem. Security aspects too - escapes, drugs. (Respondent 21)

CHANGES IN THE OFFICER'S ROLE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH INMATES

Most officers are happy with the change in role and responsibilities.

The introduction of case management meant that officers' relationships with inmates would change, and that they would be undertaking a new range of tasks and responsibilities. In this regard, officers were asked how they felt about having those extra responsibilities, especially in terms of their changed relationship with inmates.

A large majority of officers said these changes were fine, were part of the job, or that there really was no difference from their previous role, and that it also helped them get to know the inmate better, know with whom they were dealing. These responses were interesting as some of the officers were contradicting their previous responses where they had been so negative about case management at their centres. Perhaps they were making a distinction between the value of case management as a process and case management as it was being practised at their centre. Only one officer, from a centre where case management was said to be working well, thought that the change in responsibilities and role for officers had become 'a nuisance'. His comment was interesting as it indicates a degree of frustration and a perception that he now lacks authority to make and act on his own judgements about inmates:

Now they come to you when they want something. Most of the time they can get it from anybody - it's mostly garbage. Under the old system if they were good you'd give it to them. If not, they got what they were entitled to and that was it. (Respondent 19)

Some examples of other comments about the change in responsibilities and relationships with inmates are:

It's fine

Not chummy buddy, don't share life stories. I don't mind at all. I'm quite happy to sit down and have a bit of a yak. Some of the long-term inmates have problems talking to officers. (Respondent 3)

To start with it was very hard. I had no real interest in whether they were happy or not. I'm here to make sure they're supervised. It's easier now that it's settled down. (Respondent 10)

When I started the job I was told - don't talk to the inmates. Now I've adapted, treat people as they treat me. I'm here eight hours a day, but I'm a good listener. I don't mind talking about stuff. My first case was a life, a motor, and it was the worst experience of my life. Now I approach it differently. I take more control of the process. There's not a lot involved in keeping up the files. (Respondent 16)

I find it intriguing. Even if you treat them as an enemy - wouldn't you want to know about them and make your job easier? (Respondent 28)

No problem. Fairly good things really. Lets you manage them better. (Respondent 30)

Gives you a little bit of insight into inmates. (Respondent 36)

Fine. If anything, it helps to stop problems before they start rather than not dealing with them. Some of them feel they can come and tell you. (Respondent 37)

Part of the job

No problem with that at all. Our main concern is duty of care to these people. There is a level of trust and they might be inclined to tell you a little bit more because they feel the confidentiality. Dynamic security. (Respondent 7)

Part of my role - part of the modern role. Staffing levels have dropped so much - dynamic security is very important. (Respondent 24)

No difference
I don't think things have changed except now we write it down. All officers should get to know their inmates. Often something will happen and there is no time to write it down. (Respondent 1)

No different to before. You always know the inmates. But in case management you write it down. (Respondent 26)

It's too personal now

I thought it was too personal. Prisoners want to tell you things about their crime and family life. When I first joined it was stressed that if we didn’t know what their crime was then they’d be treated impartially. It’s not a good thing, familiarity breeds contempt. (Respondent 9)

Some cases, yes. Others are a problem. I prefer not to know what they’re in for. If you’re a care officer then you know what they’ve done. With some crimes it takes a lot more willpower than I’ve got sometimes to be able to talk to an inmate when I know what they’ve done. Child molesters bragging about what they’ve done. (Respondent 10)

Don’t like the relationship with inmates. Should be a line between us. They don’t really like us and we don’t really like them. (Respondent 12)

A further question asked officers where they thought the difference was between having a professional relationship with an inmate and ‘crossing the line’ to a personal one. One-third of officers responded that being aware was the key, that experience and ‘being streetwise’ helped them avoid problems or alerted them to problems. Over one-quarter of officers said that they never told an inmate anything personal about themselves, thus avoiding the inmate getting to know them in a personal way, which could lead to the inmate trying to manipulate the situation. Another group of officers, over one-third, said that it was difficult to know where the line was between personal and professional relationships, and that knowing the inmate’s problems made it hard for them. Only two officers said they had no problem in distinguishing between personal and professional relationships with inmates.

Some representative comments from each of these groups of officers are:

Being streetwise

I don’t have a problem with it, but I have seen it. I have seen at the Special Care Unit someone crosses the line in five or six weeks. Unfortunately, some officers think because they’re a care officer it’s OK, but you can’t cross the line. Some inmates think you’re only there to do things for them. (Respondent 7)

Keep your distance from inmates, be friendly without being their friend. Tell inmates nothing personal about yourself and be on your guard.

This happens when officers get caught unaware by manipulative inmates.

The officers were then asked to give their opinions about the kinds of situations that they thought would lead to a blurring of the boundaries between personal and professional relationships. The majority of responses raised issues to do with officers not realising they were getting too close to inmates and the need for officers to maintain a distance between themselves and the inmate. A small number of officers were concerned with the ability of inmates to manipulate officers and that officers needed to be vigilant to ensure this did not happen. A very small number of officers said there were no situations that they knew of where personal and professional boundaries got blurred between officers and inmates.

Some of the comments made by officers are:

Officers need to keep at a distance/avoid getting too close to inmates.
Officers doing regular wing work are likely to be more familiar, have more contact with the same prisoners. (Respondent 9)

It just seems to be that it happens to people. I don't know why. It happens sometimes – just happens. You need to be really vigilant and nip it in the bud. (Respondent 16)

Once an officer brought in a war video for the guys to watch. It didn't occur to him that he was contravening the Act, and another incident too where the officer wanted to bring something in for an inmate. (Respondent 16)

After a period of time you can get too close talking freely, it'd be too hard. Inmates would know you weren't telling them anything, just want to know about their private life. (Respondent 33)

**Inmates manipulating the situation**

Visits. Crims would use that situation to try to push boundaries with the officer. (Respondent 15)

It's up to the officer. Inmates are very manipulative to get something out of you. They'll be your best friend. If you work together a lot it might happen. Custodials don't have that but industries [officers] do. (Respondent 27)

**'GETTING ON' WITH INMATES**

It is important to get on with inmates. It makes life easier, safer, and the environment is better for everyone. Intelligence information is better.

Given that case management requires officers to interact with inmates, officers were asked if they thought it was important to be able to 'get on' with inmates and how they dealt with situations where an inmate might make things difficult for them.

Overwhelmingly officers said that it was important to be able to 'get on' with inmates because it made life easier and safer, created a better environment for everyone, and that intelligence information was better as a result. For example:

I've never been at loggerheads with anyone. Some officers wouldn't get on with any inmates. There's not a 'McDonald's' officer. Different strokes for different folks. (Respondent 11)

One day it might save your life – if they've got problems, you know how they react and react to you in a serious situation. They don't try to con you too much. None have ever asked me to bring anything in. (Respondent 17)

Shit yeah, if you have that cooperation sometimes an inmate's better than an officer. If you didn't, problems would never get solved and you'd never hear about them either. (Respondent 21)

A small number of officers said it was not important to get on with inmates. Some of their reasons were:

Not always important to get on with them. Some inmates need somebody to stand up to them. Some officers try to stand over inmates. Some inmates need someone to tell them what to do for a change. That' s where experience comes in to be able to work with inmates. (Respondent 1)

Not necessarily. You know what you have to do in case management. Obviously it helps if you can sit and talk about an issue. With case management we encourage that. As adults, let's see if we can work problems out. (Respondent 7)

**DEALING WITH DIFFICULT INMATES**

Ignore them, talk to them or give them time to calm down.

When asked how they would deal with an inmate who tried to make things difficult for them, half of the officers responded that they would initially ignore this type of behaviour, talk to the inmate to try to find out what the problem was, or give the inmate some time to calm down. Some of these officers said that no inmate had ever 'made life difficult for them', but if they did they would implement those types of strategies. A number of others said they would use the formal processes of case management to sort it out, for example, reporting the inmate's behaviour on a running sheet, issuing a warning, or asking the case manager to intervene.
Overall, responses to these interview questions indicate that, in the centres visited, the storage of and access to case management files varied greatly and appeared to depend on the size of the correctional centre and their own policies and practices in that regard. Access to files ranged from unrestricted for DCS staff, to strict, whereby files are kept in locked cabinets and have to be signed for when removed. Officers had a range of different views about these issues.

While DCS policy encourages any officer or non-custodial person who has anything to do with the management of an inmate to write notes in the file, in practice, the majority of comments in the case files are written by case officers and case managers. Other officers use case management running sheets to record comments or observations about inmates who are not part of their case load.

**Feedback to Officers about their Case Management**

Most officers receive feedback about their case notes, over half receive regular feedback.

How officers know if their case notes are appropriate is generally through feedback from their Case Manager. In responding to a question about feedback, nearly three-quarters of the officers said they did get some kind of feedback about their notes. Over half of these officers said they received regular feedback. The rest of this group said they either occasionally or rarely received any feedback about their case notes. Few officers said they never received any feedback.

Some interesting comments from officers about feedback are:

- Twice positive -- more likely to say you're doing a bad job. Once written, once oral. (Respondent 6)
- I did get a letter from the boss once. It had a good effect -- it's nice to know you're doing something right. But [feedback] not on a regular basis really. I now know I'm not useless. I try hard. (Respondent 16)
- Regular feedback, sometimes written, sometimes oral. Feedback is very important to keep the whole process going. (Respondent 21)

**Alter the or Removin Anything from the Case File**

Files can be altered with a further entry. Case Manager approval should be sought prior to anything being removed from the file.

The newly ratified Inmate Case Management Policy (NSW DCS, 1998) addresses this issue specifically, as a direct result of the ICAC's Operation Cadix and the problems that it highlighted in this regard. The Policy now states:

*Information contained on Case Management Files must not be removed or altered in any way.*

(p.17)

In summary, some of the responses indicated a degree of uncertainty about what is the appropriate practice. Almost half of the officers said that once something is in the file it stays there, but they could write something additional and add it to the file. Some representative comments are:

What’s in the file stays there:

- Once it’s written, it stays. I won’t take anything out. It’s been written for a reason. I’d write something to add to the file but not change anything. (Respondent 1)
- You have to be honest in what you write in there. I wouldn’t do that [change anything]. It’s not something that’s happened to me to be honest. I might re-write something exactly the same if the writing is bad. I certainly wouldn’t change anything. (Respondent 7)
- I wouldn’t do it. Once it’s done it’s done. Ripping a page out is corrupt. I wouldn’t even dream of it. If you can’t be accurate – get another job. (Respondent 20)
- My view is – what’s in the file is a legal document and shouldn’t be tampered with, but it is a bit of a problem. I’ll put another note in later if it’s something. (Respondent 24)

Yes, you can alter something:

- Nobody’d stop you. Accuracy is the main thing. I’ve never done it. I’d make a note why it was changed. (Respondent 10)
- Yeah, next page would say. But not to change what’s there. Could pull out or put in pages. I wouldn’t bother. (Respondent 18)
- The pages aren’t numbered or photocopied, so you can put something else in or tamper, but I haven’t come across that. (Respondent 28)

**Officer Knowledge about Inmate Access to their Case File**

Most officers are unsure whether inmates are permitted access to their case files and tell inmates they cannot have access.
Having asked for their opinions about case management files, a number of questions were then put to officers which explored their views of inmate knowledge about and access to their case management file. Current DCS policy is that inmates can have supervised access to their own file. This is stated on the inside cover of the newer white files. When case management was first introduced however, the policy was that inmates were not to have access to their file. Inmate access to case management files changed from 'no access' to 'supervised access' some time in 1993. DCS staff report that that change is reflected in training and in the Operations Procedures Manual, Section 17.11. However, there is some confusion about this which is reflected in contradictions in DCS documents (for example, see 1994/5 DCS document 1994/5 “Area and Case Management”, and the Corrective Services Academy booklet for new officers “Area and Case Management” p. 22, undated, circa 1994/5).

Officers’ responses to the questions about inmate access to files clearly show that, in practice, most officers do not give inmates access to their file. The change in policy has not been successfully translated into practice. While there was no one correctional centre where officers were more or less knowledgeable about these issues, responses from some officers at one centre indicate they are amenable to inmate access, and several officers at another centre said that inmates were able to read their notes/files.

When asked if inmates ever ask to see their files, over half of the officers said no, and a small number said they did not know. A very small number of officers were proactive about this, saying that when they wrote case notes they read them to the inmate or let the inmate read the notes. A small number of officers did not know whether inmates could have something put on their file or not, and one officer said this could only happen through FOI.

When asked whether inmates are permitted to see their files, very few officers said ‘yes’. Nearly three-quarters of the officers either said that inmates could not see their file or did not know whether inmates could see their file or not.

The conclusion that emerges from these responses is that the large majority of officers were unwilling to show an inmate his or her case file, even when unsure about whether or not an inmate had a right to see it.

**NEW INMATES IN THE CASE LOAD**

*Officers prefer not to have to change inmates in their case load. It affects their relationship with the inmates and means there is less opportunity to follow through with things.*

The final question in this section asked officers if changing inmates in their case load impacted on their capacity to fulfil their role as case officer. In response to this almost half of the officers said yes it did affect them. In general, officers’ comments reflect a concern about their relationship with the inmate and allude to a lack of job satisfaction because of it. Examples of their comments are revealing.

- *Start to get to know an inmate, start to trust you a little, then a new inmate – you’re starting from scratch. It’s disruptive.* (Respondent 3)
- *Don’t get to follow through on what has happened with them, e.g. inmate has asked to do a course, or you set a program pathway. It interferes with that.* (Respondent 13)
- *Get sick of getting new ones. When you know someone, it’s hard. Read the new case files, truthfully there’s not a lot in them. I don’t think many jails do it.* (Respondent 15)
- *Yes. Don’t get to know inmates very well, especially behaviour, work, education. Don’t even get to interview them before they go. If you’re chasing something up they may be gone before you get an answer for them.* (Respondent 26)

Over one-quarter of the officers said the movement of inmates did not affect them, or it did not matter to them. Some of their comments are:

- *No, movement of inmates doesn’t affect me.*
  - *Need to make sure your files are up to date. Sometimes that’s a bit hard. Quite regularly we get new case files, just part of the job.* (Respondent 8)
  - *No – you just change case loads. Start again. You do get familiar with an inmate, and they get to know you.* (Respondent 25)

It doesn’t matter if inmates get moved

- *Doesn’t matter. It’s the way the system is. After a while a prisoner can get too familiar; ask for things. Can get a bit overbearing.* (Respondent 9)

**COLLEAGUES’ VIEWS ABOUT CASE MANAGEMENT**

*Most officers think that their colleagues have mixed views about case management, whereas most of them like it themselves.*

Officers were asked what they thought other officers thought about case management. Almost half said they thought other officers had mixed views about it, that is, they thought there were some good and some not so good things about it. Almost half said they thought other officers didn’t think much of case management at all. Some of their comments are worthy of note.
Other officers have positive and negative views about case management

In all honesty, a lot of officers like to complain about case management but I don’t think they really mind. It’s new and different, that’s all. It’s not hard at all. The extra responsibility is quite large as it is a legal document. Haven’t been paid for it either. (Respondent 4)

Run the full spectrum of opinions, especially as a management tool for inmates. Behaviour in the minimum side is probably worse than the maximum side - bashing and stabblings and standovers. For case management to work it has to be a management tool to get the right results. (Respondent 11)

Some like it, some don’t. For the $1500 pay rise they’ll [officers] tell you anything. If they handled it better here I’d do it. Some officers are embarrassed – they’re not well educated, not good at writing reports. (Respondent 17)

Mixed. Some dislike it, some don’t like it, some don’t care. 80% don’t want to do it, but 90% realise it’s got to be done. (Respondent 22)

Other officers don’t think much of case management

Most think it’s a load of shit. If you could see results that would be one thing, but nothing happens... Intel [intelligence information] goes to executive officers – inmates are trying to save their own ass and only give info that they think it’ll help them. Statistics show that assaults and escapes have gone up. (Respondent 2)

Think it’s a waste of time. Doesn’t seem to be consistency in the way the Case Management Committee deals with inmates. Some don’t get tipped [sent elsewhere] for serious breaches. What really annoys people is you get dirty notes in your file [adverse comments from the case manager] when you’ve been on a certain watch and you’re so busy you haven’t any time to do the case notes. (Respondent 7)

Some others think like me – it’s a waste of time. You go through all this stuff with inmates, courses, D&As [drug and alcohol counselling], etc., and when they get out it’s all forgotten. Inmates only talk to officers ‘cause they have to, not ‘cause they want to. It should only be for ones who really want to do it. (Respondent 14)

They don’t think much of it at all. Don’t like having to talk to inmates – “who cares if they’ve got problems” – others are real professional. (Respondent 26)

Majority of experienced officers bad shit about case management. Have a low regard for case work – waste of time and attitude. (Respondent 34)

A small number of officers said that other officers think case management is part of their job.

See it as part of job; though if it wasn’t enforced, it wouldn’t be done - most see the benefit but it would probably field otherwise. Yet some case officer file notes are excellent. Some would do it for various reasons, e.g. promotion. (Respondent 21)

In asking this and the following two questions, officers were provided with an opportunity to directly address what they thought the key issues were in case management. Overwhelmingly, officers had a positive response to the good things about case management. Very few officers answered this question in a negative way, and most of these were from the same correctional centre.

In summarising responses about the good things, over half the officers thought that using case management gave a good overall picture of the inmate. Several officers talked about better communication between officers, and between officers and inmates. Several others mentioned the benefits of the inmate development aspect of case management. The key issues that emerged were that because officers had to interact with the inmates and read their files, they got to know them better. They had a better idea about what kind of person they were dealing with. What also emerged was that, because officers now knew inmates better, they could be proactive by defusing difficult situations and recognising and dealing with inmate problems before they got too big. This type of inmate management is what officers and the DCS refer to as ‘dynamic security’.

Some of the officers’ comments about the positive aspects of case management are insightful and reveal an appreciation of it as a more subtle and less punitive inmate management technique. For example:

Case management provides a good overall picture of the inmate

Gives you an insight into how to deal with particular people. A record of how they’ve behaved while in custody. Right tool for inmates. (Respondent 4)

I always said, if case management collapses we’ll keep the running sheets. It’s a record of minor things that are not worth a charge, giving a good record across officers about an inmate – a bigger picture. You can then see if you can give the inmate the benefit of the doubt. (Respondent 11)

Continuity, one-to-one definitely defuses situations. Get a rapport with IDS [Inmate Development Staff]. Can show threads of behaviour for inmates and officers, e.g. if an officer doesn’t get on with criminals. (Respondent 23)

Getting to know the inmate and finding out and fixing minor problems before they become major. A very good management tool if used. Can sit down with inmates and talk and defuse problems and pick up other problems you can nip in the bud. Gives the inmate a point of focus too. (Respondent 30)
Better communication

Talk to inmates more civilly. Closer interaction and makes life better. Cuts out a bit of the "us and them" from officers too. (Respondent 29)

Inmate development

Getting them to go and see people about help. They're more likely to seek help, even if it's for the wrong reason. May help stop harm some day to selves or others. (Respondent 3)

THE PROBLEMS WITH CASE MANAGEMENT

A range of systemic issues was raised:
- Lack of time and resources
- Delays
- Training
- Different case management needed for long and short term inmates
- Inmates do not like talking to officers

Officers raised a wide range of issues as being problematic. If these responses are indicative, officers clearly perceive any problems with case management to be unrelated to them. In their view it is the 'system' of case management that is causing problems. Systemic issues amounted to over three-quarters of the problems mentioned. Problems with inmates were mentioned by a number of officers, but problems relating directly to officers were mentioned on only two occasions. The broad categories of problems were as follows:

- Systemic problems - time; resources; the system itself; Classification Committee; training; process delays; short term and long term inmates need a different system; too much responsibility for officers.
- Problems with inmates - they do not like talking to officers; get too close; lie; use the system.
- Problems with officers - some do not want to be part of case management.

WHAT I WOULD CHANGE

- Provide more time and resources
- Be able to choose to do case management
- Be able to opt out of case management
- Be able to choose or change inmate/officers

In responding to this invitation to say what things officers would change about case management, no one issue stood out from the others as of primary concern across the different correctional centres. The issues were raised by a number of officers were:

- Time and resources - in order for case management to be properly done, more time needed to be made available to officers to write case notes, keep files up-to-date, see inmates. More staff needed to be made available to relieve officers to do these things, and to replace officers who were on leave, or otherwise away from their inmates for periods of time.
- Selecting officers and inmates - those who wanted to do case management should be allowed to self-select to do it. Officers who do not want to do case management should be able to opt out. In some instances, if case managing an inmate is not producing results, then the inmate should be taken off the program.
- Case management files need to be made more user friendly - files are too big, have too many sections, sometimes alerts are not where they should be, some sections are not relevant.
- There should be a different case management process and file for long term inmates and inmates serving shorter sentences.
- There is a need for better initial training in case management and/or either on-going or refresher courses.

OTHER COMMENTS

When asked if they had any further comments to make, almost half the officers did so. These covered a variety of new and previously canvassed points, of which some verify that case management works quite differently in different centres. For example, one officer commented that Inmate Development Services (IDS) staff should input directly into the case file rather than the case officer "running around and getting it all". In practice, the IDS staff should already have direct input into the file.

Examples of new points raised in comments are that: officers working in the industries sections of correctional centres should have a case load as they work with inmates more closely than other officers; the new 8am - 4pm day for inmates will cut back on the time available for officers to do case management; it is disheartening for officers to see repeat offenders who have been through case management; and, unit management was better than case management.
SUMMARY OF ALL RESPONSES

WHAT DOES CASE MANAGEMENT MEAN?

For officers, case management means better management and monitoring of inmates. For inmates it means being able to sort out their problems with one officer as a point of contact, whom they trust, and it provides support.

HOW WELL IS CASE MANAGEMENT WORKING

Most officers think that case management is not working well in their correctional centre. Inmates’ comments indicated a similar view.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INMATES AND OFFICERS

Inmates think that it is very important to be able to ‘get on’ with their case officer, and because of the capacity of the officer to affect their life in custody, it is important not to get on the ‘wrong side’ of the officer. If an officer was making life difficult, most inmates said they would ignore the officer, do nothing, and try to stay out of the officer’s way.

Similarly, officers said it was important to be able to ‘get on’ with inmates because it makes life easier, the environment is better for everyone, and intelligence is better. Officers said that if an inmate was being particularly difficult, they would ignore them, talk to them or give them time to calm down.

Officers said that the boundaries between personal and professional relationships with inmates get blurred when officers are caught unaware by a manipulative inmate. That it is best to be on your guard, keep your distance from inmates and tell them nothing personal about yourself. Nonetheless, generally officers are happy with the new role and responsibilities that case management has provided. However, most felt let down by the initial training process, which appears to have been, at best, ad hoc.

CHANGING CASE OFFICER OR CHANGING INMATES

Both inmates and officers said that this had a negative impact on case management, as each time it happens it means starting all over again to build up trust. Some officers said there is less opportunity to follow through with things when inmates in their case load change too often.

OFFICERS, INMATES AND CASE FILES

There was general concurrence between officers about what a case file should contain. However, the majority of officers did not know that inmates are entitled to have supervised access to their own case file. Most officers think that case file notes can be altered by making a new note and that prior to removing anything from the file, the Case Manager’s permission should be sought. Most officers received feedback about their case notes. Over half receive regular feedback.

Most inmates are unsure about what the case file contains, however, they know that what is in there is taken as fact and used to assess their suitability for programs, reduction in classification and parole.

THE BEST THING ABOUT CASE MANAGEMENT

For inmates, it is that case management gives them a specific officer to report to that they trust. For officers, it is that it provides a good overall picture of the inmate; they get to know inmates better – communication is improved; and they can be more proactive in circumventing problems.

PROBLEMS WITH CASE MANAGEMENT

Inmates’ views about problems:

- The case officer has to be a custodial officer
- If the officer does not like the inmate you cannot change your case officer, and vice versa
- Case management needs more input for inmates – they should be consulted more rather than having someone else making judgements about their needs
- Inmates do not like having to change to a different case officer while still in the same centre as the previous case officer

Officers raised a range of systemic issues that they thought were problematic:

- Lack of time and resources to do case management properly
- Delays in getting inmates into programs
- Their initial training
- Different case management is needed for long term and short term inmates
- Inmates do not like having to talk to officers.
The issue of less detailed case management for short term inmates has been addressed by the Department. There are now two different files, and thus case management processes, in use: one for inmates serving more than 12 months, and one for inmates serving 12 months or less.

**WHAT NEEDS TO BE CHANGED?**

Inmates said they would want to be able to keep the same case officer while at a centre, and that officers should be more available to do case management properly.

Officers said they need more time and resources to do case management properly, that they should be able to opt to be a case officer, rather than it being compulsory. They also said that they should have a say in the inmates in their case load.

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**KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH**

This final section of the report summarises the key issues that have arisen from the research. A number of recommendations have been made pertaining to many of the issues raised.

Probably the most important issue that has emerged from this exploratory research is that both inmates and officers think that case management is a 'good thing'. This will probably surprise many people, for two main reasons: both historical and cultural. The first is the historical development of the officers' custodial role and the strong officer culture that still prevails in that regard. The second is the historical reticence that inmates have had in speaking with officers, and the strong inmate culture that still prevails in that regard. Knowing this, it is then even more remarkable that this generally positive attitude to case management exists. Given that the introduction of case management has occurred within the last six or seven years, a major shift in the attitude of many officers and inmates has obviously occurred.

Accordingly, the summary of issues and recommendations that follow should be read through that positive 'conceptual lens'. The issues that have emerged really point to the fact that case management needs some 'renovation', an injection of robustness and overt support in the form of resources and reaffirming current and new policies and procedures. Given that inmates think having a case officer is a 'good thing', the DCS should capitalise on this.

No identifiable differences have emerged in this research in how case management operates in male and female correctional centres. This does not mean that differences do not exist, however, the small number of female inmates included in the interviews means that no conclusions can be drawn in this respect. Because of the small number and the few centres where female inmates are in custody, care has been taken to ensure that responses do not identify them in any way.

A second, and major, issue that needs to be borne in mind is the impact of what are known as "organizational determinants" on an individual's attitudes to his or her work (Jurik, 1985, p. 526). In short, the literature indicates that the attitudes, values and behaviours that are condoned in the work environment will supersede an individual's attitudes and values and therefore their work practices. In a large and disparate bureaucratic structure such as
that of the Department of Corrective Services, opportunities are available for individual correctional centres to function according to their own particular brand of 'work culture', because the work environment is 'closed' to the outside world. What happens beyond the main gate is not open to public scrutiny in the same way as are practices in other public sector organisations. Consequently, the Department needs to be more forthright and vigilant in promoting a corporate culture that does not tolerate, even by default, centre-specific approaches to work values and practices.

Finally, the issue of corruption. While acts of corruption have been uncovered in Operation Cadix, this exploratory research has not revealed that case management provides or fosters opportunities for corruption any more than any other process used by the system. Opportunities for corruption will always be available to those who seek to find them. What has been noted is that, in some correctional centres, a climate is being created whereby opportunities for corruption could arise because of the lack of adherence to policies and procedures. In other words, the management of case management lacks rigour and many practices have become sloppy.

What the organisation can do, and what the DCS needs to do, is try to lessen those opportunities by ensuring that officers know what the proper policies and procedures are and that they follow them. After all, case officers are the point of contact between 'the system' and the inmates – this is a pivotal role. Case officers need to know that their job is important and valued by a Management that promotes a rigorous and audited case management process. In so doing, a climate is fostered in which corruption is not tolerated and opportunities for wrong doing are minimised.

This point has been starkly made in an incident which recently occurred at one correctional centre. The more so because it was at a centre that had been visited for this research, so management and a number of the officers there were aware that senior Department of Corrections staff were looking closely at case management. At that centre it was discovered that the case files of five high profile inmates were missing. One file was subsequently located, but, at the time of writing, the other four have still not been found, nor has it been established how or exactly when they were removed. The investigation into their disappearance also found that appropriate staff were not completing the required paperwork, that there was a failure to record and account for the movement of the case files from one part of the centre to another, and that security measures were inadequate in the supposedly secure area where the case files were kept. The investigation also revealed that a previous recent audit of case files was conducted because a substantial number of case files were not where they should have been.

What has happened at that centre is that even a basic standard procedure in the case management process has been allowed to falter, despite the fact that all the 'appearances' of case management are there: case officers have case loads, and there are case managers in charge of case officers and case files. It is likely that some other centres also have the 'appearance' of a functioning case management system, but in reality the process has become watered down to the point where a few case notes in the case file are about all that happens. In such institutions, case management as an integrated process seems to have lapsed to a large extent.

**INDUCTION OF INMATES**

For inmates, lack of trust and lack of faith in the confidentiality of the system, including case management, were recurring themes in their responses. Whether commenting about having to talk to officers, speculating about the information contained in their case file or the deliberations of committees, many inmates were preoccupied with the confidentiality of any information that officers had about them or gave to them. Inmates' responses strongly indicate that not providing them with accurate information, or actively keeping information from them, leads to further distrust. If inmates want information they will get it from any source they can. Often, it appears, this is another inmate, meaning that the information may well be unreliable and inaccurate. As one inmate commented:

*If you talk to an officer] You can be seen as a dog, a suck. You'll have no friends, no one will speak to you or help you. Screen don't tell you anything, it's the inmates who tell you everything.*

(Respondent 27)

Inmates lack accurate information about case management, its purpose, structure and process. The operation of case management would be greatly improved if inmates were told about it when they arrive at a centre. Inducting inmates about what they can expect from case management and what they are expected to put into it would provide a clear starting point. Inmates should be told about their case file, their rights to have access to it, what it is for and what it contains. Misinformation and lack of understanding would be minimised if inmates had a thorough induction about case management. As noted earlier, Porritt's (1988) New South Wales research found that providing inmates with information about prison rules helped to alleviated stress attributed to their feeling uninformed.

**Recommendations**

1.1 That inmate induction into custodial life be made compulsory in all correctional centres.

1.2 That induction includes an explanation of the objectives of case management, what inmates can expect from it, and what they are expected to contribute to it.

1.3 That inmates are told about their entitlement to access their case file and how to have information included in it.

1.4 That the document *Inmate Case Management Policy* (NSW DCS 1998) be made available to inmates, if this is not already the case. Inmates should also be given this information during induction.
FUNCTIONING OF CASE MANAGEMENT ACROSS CORRECTIONAL CENTRES

Case management is not functioning appropriately in all centres. It needs to be re-vitualised with renewed, demonstrated commitment from Management that the process is important and will continue to be implemented. In some centres case management seems to be working quite well, in others it appears to not be working at all. All the centres visited had a similar 'appearance' of implementing case management. That is, they had all the case management 'flags' in place: case files in filing cabinets, case officers, and case managers. All but one of the officers interviewed had a case load. The way the system of inmate management functions ensures that at least the most basic requirements of case management have to be fulfilled. The committees that oversee inmate classification and progression through their sentence use the case files as a basis for their deliberations and decisions, so the files must at least contain monthly updates. But the extent to which case officers undertake their case management duties varies greatly. This seems to be for a variety of reasons. One appears to be the extent to which Management at the centre 'drive' case management and how that 'drive' is manifested in resources, structures and symbols that support it. Another, related reason, given by many officers is that they do not have enough time to adequately fulfill their case officer role, because time is not factored into the structure of their day to enable them to do it properly. This may, of course, be a handy excuse for not fulfilling case management obligations.

In one centre, Management seemed unable to get officers to engage in case management in any real sense. In others case management seems to 'plod' along without senior people taking any real interest. In others, it appears to function because of the support of the case manager. The importance of case management needs to be reinforced from the top down in all centres, with a commensurate commitment of resources and structures to support it. This means recognising the importance of the case officer's role in implementing it. Management need to acknowledge that case management requires officers to undertake different tasks from those associated with their custodial role, and that these tasks take up a percentage of an officer's time on duty. It seems somewhat counter-productive to ensure that the 'flags' for case management are in place and then not provide a structure for it to function.

A further issue that has arisen is the inherent conflict in some of the tasks associated with being a case officer and being a custodial officer. For example, some officers and inmates mentioned the problem that arises when an officer has to conduct a cell or body search of someone who is part of his or her case load and then expecting the inmate to discuss problems with the same officer. These sorts of issues may be overcome by a change in policy and practice, for example, by ensuring that officers are not required to undertake these tasks with inmates who are part of their case load.

In terms of 'auditing' the case management process across the system, there is a small two-person audit team, which is part of the DCS Corrections Operational Support Team (COS Team), which visits centres twice a year specifically to look at case files. Their task is to ensure that the standard of notes and information in the files is appropriate. One case file from every case officer at each centre is looked at from the date of the last 'audit'. The security arrangements for the files are noted, but not audited as such. The audit function is important. However, both of the current members of the audit team have a dual function - auditing case files is only one part of their role. If DCS is serious about monitoring the standard of case management across the system and within centres, then this function needs to be expanded considerably in terms of human resources and delegation. The whole process of case management should be audited in correctional centres. As a corollary, Management need to demonstrate their commitment to it by incorporating case management into the centre's strategic plans and into the key accountabilities of job descriptions.

There are also obvious individual and systemic implications from these findings. Officer job satisfaction and commitment will be diminished if they feel unsupported. Dynamic security will be affected. Management need to be publicly supportive of case management, including acknowledging the value of case officers' work. Case management is not a difficult process, but it requires vigilance and commitment from the top: something that a number of officers, and indeed at least one inmate, commented was lacking.

Recommendations

2.1 That a consistent standard of case management is implemented across all correctional centres.

2.2 That case management should be incorporated into the strategic plans of correctional centres, leading to direct accountability for its implementation.

2.3 That Senior Management in correctional centres should have the application of case management, to best practice standards, as part of their key accountabilities.

2.4 That, if not already the case, each centre should have in place a standard system of ongoing case management auditing by Senior Management at that centre.
2.5 That either the current audit function is expanded and upgraded, with much wider function and authority, or some other way found to more robustly scrutinize the application and standard of case management across the system.

2.6 That ways be explored to exclude officers from having to undertake such tasks as cell and body searches with inmates who are part of their case load.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE ROLE OF THE CASE OFFICER AND CASE MANAGER

This is an aspect of case management that seems to be missing. While some case managers provide regular feedback to officers, in general, feedback seems to consist of a comment on case file notes, or a general comment for all officers on a notice board. The type and regularity of feedback to case managers is not known. However, as has been noted, the application of case management stands or falls at the site of service delivery— with the officers and managers. It is important therefore that the pivotal role of these officers is acknowledged. Good management includes providing positive feedback to staff. It improves morale, costs very little, and acknowledges the effort that individuals make in the work place. Given the difficult environment in which correctional officers work, positive feedback would seem to be especially important. Thought needs to be given as to the best way that this can occur.

Recommendation

3.1 That organisational ‘symbols’ for acknowledging good case officers and case managers are developed and built into the case management process.

A CHANGE OF CASE OFFICER

Both inmates and officers have commented that being required to change case officer or inmates because of a move to a different part of the same correctional centre is a negative aspect of case management. Neither group likes having to change too often. However, both groups also said that if you do not get on with your case officer, or the inmate, officers and inmates should be able to request a change. Sometimes personality clashes occur and it is simpler to request a change than try to make case management work in that atmosphere.

Recommendations

4.1 That ways be explored to minimise inmates having to change case officer or the officer having to change inmates within the same correctional centre.

4.2 That ways be explored to accommodate officers and/or inmates being able to request a change when such things as personality clashes occur. If this option is a centre by centre decision, perhaps discussion with officers about this situation would bring it to a satisfactory resolution.

CASE MANAGEMENT OF LONG AND SHORT TERM INMATES

The appropriateness of the current structure of case management for long and short term inmates was an issue raised by a number of officers and inmates. It is their view that long term inmates need a particular type of case management that is more relevant to their length of time in custody and their particular needs. Similarly, the allocation of a case officer to a long term inmate needs to be carefully thought through. Several long term inmates commented on the allocation to them of inappropriate case officers. This has a negative impact on inmate and officer alike and should be avoided. It could easily be brought to the attention of case managers by adding a comment to the policy and/or procedures document which makes this point.

It is noted that a modified case management process is now in place for inmates in custody for 12 months or less, however, this needs to be conveyed to officers, as clearly many of them are not aware of this change.

Recommendations

5.1 That consideration be given to developing a different case management process for long term inmates.

5.2 That the appropriate document relating to allocating case loads emphasises the need to carefully consider the allocation of case officers to long term inmates. The need to consider the experience and gender of the officer should also be specifically mentioned.

SECURITY OF CASE FILES

The tension which exists between keeping case files secure and having them accessible for officers is acknowledged. However, security of case files is an issue that needs to be revisited, as required procedures are not being followed in all centres. Responses from officers indicate that there is some difficulty in balancing the need for the files to be secure and the need for officers to have access to them. For example, several officers said that night duty was a good time to bring the files up-to-date because there was quiet time to write the notes. However, the files were sometimes locked in the case manager’s office and so are not accessible. If night duty is followed by escort duty, or duty in another part of the correctional centre, then it may be several weeks before the officer is in a position to update any of the files.

While the requirements for the security of case files are stated in the Operations Procedures Manual, Section 17.11 (NSW DCS 1996), this is inconsistently adhered to across the correctional centres visited. Security of the files ranged from their being kept in locked filing cabinets with a sign-out book in the case manager’s office (which was locked when not occupied) to virtually unimpeded access to the files. In one centre, the files were...
in an office in the wing, separate from the office where the officers sat. The file office was not locked and neither were the filing cabinets. In fact one cabinet had dent marks on the drawers, which would have made it impossible to lock. All centres keep their files in lockable cabinets but protocols about actually locking the cabinets or logging the movement of files have lapsed in a number of centres.

As previously discussed, the discovery that case files were missing from one correctional centre further highlights the need for security and vigilance. DCS staff responsible for designing the files are seeking ways to improve them and it is understood that discussions are taking place about strategies to make the removal of files from a centre more difficult.

**Recommendations**

6.1 That an immediate audit of the security of case files be conducted in all centres, independent of the Management of that centre, and that the ongoing security of them be addressed.

6.2 That the security policy be reviewed in order that the accessibility of the files and security of them is addressed. A ‘case management best practice’ centre may be a useful model.

6.3 That, in order to facilitate access to and security of the case files, consideration be given to taking the case manager position ‘off-line’, to focus on case management exclusively, and to the position being rostered over seven days.

**Security of Information Contained in Case Files**

Subsequent to some segments of the ICAC’s public hearings into improper relationships between some DCS staff members and inmates, security of information in case files has emerged as a serious issue that needs to be addressed. There should be no doubt about the requirements for security of information in case files subsequent to the new Inmate Case Management Policy (NSW DCS 1998) which states that:

> Information contained on Case Management Files must not be removed or altered in any way (p. 17).

**Recommendations**

7.1 That the new Inmate Case Management Policy and the relevant statement (as indicated above) be clearly conveyed to every officer in the employment of the DCS and any other relevant person who has access to case files.

7.2 That security of information in case files be specifically addressed at all training and refresher courses provided for DCS corrections staff and IDS, and Corrections Health staff.

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**Officer Training**

When a new procedure is being implemented in an organisation the amount of time and money spent on training sends many messages to staff which, in turn, may be reflected in their job satisfaction and feeling valued by the organisation. For example, some of these messages (or the converse) might be:

- Management is serious about this change because they are providing money and resources for it.
- The importance of my role in the new system is reflected in the time, energy and resources being provided to train me.
- Appropriate recognition of my new role is reflected in the structures and symbols of the organisation.

This observation is borne out by officers’ responses to a number of questions in relation to their initial training for the introduction of case management. When case management was first introduced, the initial training of officers in case management procedures was not a happy story. As has been discussed, many officers clearly felt let down in this respect, and that Management were not really serious about case management or officers having a broader understanding of the case management process. In the view of some officers, training amounted to being told to read a number of modules explaining the process (no one checked to see if they had read them or not) and/or having a small number of one- or two-hour training sessions over a period of several months and then being asked to sign a document to say they had been trained.

Officers’ responses indicate that they felt they lacked basic skills and knowledge about case management processes and procedures. This has had a lasting impact on its implementation, particularly in terms of the interviews. Many officers acknowledged that they did not really know what to say or do in the interviews with inmates and have learned along the way. Inmates reported that interviews mostly amount to the officer asking them how they are going and if they have any problems. For some inmates, this ‘interview’ occurs in the yard, or wherever the officer happens to see them. One inmate reported that his case officer virtually conducted the interview while conducting a search of the inmate’s cell! Some inmates also said that during the interview they just say they are going fine, and have no problems, because they think that is what the officer wants to hear. They think the officer is not really comfortable in the interview, or really does not want to know about their problems.

The Media Unit of the COS Team has developed and is in the process of distributing a multi-media double CD ROM training and information package entitled “Case Management”. It uses the fictional case study of an Aboriginal inmate to take officers through the entire case management process. As well as the case study vignettes, a variety
of other ways of finding out about particular aspects of case management is available. It is a user friendly and relevant resource. However, its success will rely on, first, the distribution of computer hardware to individual correctional centres, second, the CD being accessible, and third, officers’ ability and willingness to use the computer equipment to view it. Distribution of the resource material and the computer equipment is currently underway. The package is also being used to train new officers about case management, and hopefully their knowledge of it will encourage them to use it once they are on the job. It is also being used with officers who are on refresher courses and officers who are training as newly appointed case managers.

Officers’ lack of knowledge about inmates’ rights of access to their files is a serious concern.

Recommendations

That in order to bring about a more consistent application of case management across the system:

8.1 Initial training about case management is given appropriate time in the training schedule, consistent with amount of time officers will spend in the case management of inmates in correctional centres.

8.2 Initial training includes officers receiving instruction on the concepts and theory behind case management, its processes and objectives and benefits to themselves and the custodial environment.

8.3 Initial training includes giving officers an understanding of the reasons for conducting interviews in a one-on-one situation and the basic psychology behind the approach, as well as interview skills and techniques. Opportunities should be provided where those skills and techniques can be practised in a variety of role plays prior to applying them in a real situation.

8.4 All officers have compulsory refresher courses, perhaps every two years, on how to conduct case management, including reinforcing conceptual knowledge and understanding, as well as the practical application of it.

8.5 All officers are informed about the new Inmate Case Management Policy, with particular mention being made about inmate access to the case file.

8.6 Management are given a refresher course about case management with an emphasis on the importance of their role in reinforcing continued best practice and the consequences of this for systemic issues such as dynamic security, officer job satisfaction, staff turnover and sick leave, and importantly minimising an environment that is conducive to corruption.

Recruitment and Selection of Officers

While exploration of recruitment and selection procedures for correctional officers was outside the scope of this project, the results suggest that, if not already planned, that a review of these procedures would prove worthwhile as some officers do not exhibit appropriate oral communication skills. The type of person needed to fill the role of today’s officer is very different from that of even five years ago. Good communication skills are now more important than ever for officers in managing inmates – case management is about communication, oral and written. Accordingly, an adjustment needs to be made to the type of people recruited for officer positions. For example, is the ability to demonstrate good oral and written communication skills one of the essential criteria required for job applicants? Is the current required level of literacy appropriate for the tasks officers are now required to undertake? Given advancements in technology and the increasing sophistication of the modern public sector workplace, the need for officers to be computer literate, good problem solvers and communicators is only going to increase. Recruiting people with the most appropriate skills is essential.

Recommendations

9.1 That a review of recruitment and selection procedures be undertaken as soon as possible in order to ensure that people with the most appropriate skills are being attracted to apply for officer positions, including:

- a review of the required literacy standard for recruits to ensure that this is in line with best practice standards;
- a review of job descriptions to ensure that the essential criteria include ‘the ability to demonstrate good oral and written communication skills at an appropriate level’.

9.2 That 12 months after this review and the changes that eventuate, a further review be undertaken to fine tune the process and assess whether or not the changes are having the desired effect.
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**OTHER**


Appendix 1

Inmate Classification

A brief description of the security classification process for male and female inmates is described below. It is outlined in detail in the DCS Classification and Placement Manual.

Inmates generally fall into one of three categories: those sentenced to 12 months or less; those sentenced to more than 12 months and less than 12 years; and those sentenced to 12 years or more. The Serious Offenders Review Council (SORC) manages this last category of inmates, those serving 12 years or more.

There are currently two types of inmate classification in use: one at the Metropolitan Regional Remand Centre (MRRC at the Silverwater complex) and the other in all other Reception Centres throughout the state. The different process used at the MRRC has been implemented because of the high number of inmates they receive into custody. Long Bay, can on occasions, also use this process if the number of receptions is high.

Notwithstanding the process, the levels of security classification in NSW are as follows:

Table 3: Security classification categories for male inmates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description of level of supervision and security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>A specific program for intensively case managed inmates at Goulburn only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Maximum security for inmates whose offences are considered severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2U</td>
<td>Unsentenced inmates whose offences are considered severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Medium security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BU</td>
<td>Unsentenced medium security inmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Minimum security but confined within the correctional centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Minimum security and can work outside the confines of the centre under supervision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>A specific program giving unsupervised day leave away from the centre, but inmate movements are strictly controlled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any inmate who has escaped or has attempted to escape is given either an E1 or E2 classification, depending on the circumstances of the event.

All newly received inmates are put through the Reception, Screening and Induction process. This commences the inmate's Case Management File. The information gathered at Screening and Induction is very important and is entered into the file. Through a series of interviews inmates are asked, among other things, a number of questions relating to their education and employment history, their physical and emotional health, including self-harm, addictions, or other medical requirements.

Metropolitan Regional and Remand Centre

The Reception and Induction Committee has the task of screening, assessing and classifying all inmates newly received into custody at the MRRC. This team decides how much case management an inmate needs. Some inmates may not need much in the way of case management, but all inmates have a case file. Screening, assessing and classifying usually occurs on the third day after an inmate has been sentenced. The inmate is then moved to a designated correctional centre accompanied by their case file. Inmates serving 12 years or more are processed and referred to the SORC.

All Other Reception Centres

In other centres only the short-term inmates are dealt with at Reception and Induction. All others are referred to the Case Management Team and subsequently to the Case Management Committee (CMC).

After initial classification an inmate must be seen at least once every six months to have it reviewed. Again this is done by the PRC recommending to the CMC.
PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE/CASE MANAGEMENT TEAM

This is a local Committee comprised of people at the correctional centre. It meets every three months to review inmate progress. While it makes recommendations it has no decision-making powers about inmate classification or placement. The inmate must attend the CMT, and, if needed, correctional officers can also be called to attend.

CASE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

This Committee brings a senior person, a Deputy Manager from outside the correctional centre, into the classification process. This person chairs the Committee as required by legislation. A number of people can sit on the Committee, for example, psychologist, Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) counsellor. However, the other required members are the Programs Manager and the Deputy Governor or, if not available, their nominee.

The job of the Committee is to assess recommendations from the CMT about classification and placement and makes the final decision about these. With regard to classification, several criteria are used to try to objectively assess the appropriateness or otherwise of recommendations. Information on the case management file provides historical data about the inmate while in custody. A scoring system is also used as a way of assessing the inmate’s recent performance, that is over the previous six months, in achieving a number of objectives. Some of these criteria are: how the inmate is behaving in custody; the length of time still to be served; and how the inmate is addressing their offending behaviour, e.g. are they participating in the appropriate programs. This Committee does not usually call on inmates, but can if it wishes. The Committee also reviews recommendations in order to ensure that supporting documents are in the file, that the inmate has demonstrated that they have achieved what they say they have achieved, that the recommendations are realistic, and the policy and requirements governing the process have been followed.

Most variations to recommendations occur with regard to placements rather than classifications. This is for pragmatic reasons. Depending on the classification level of the inmate, beds are available only in certain centres. It is the availability of beds which often determines placement, rather than other factors, e.g. being near family.

SERIOUS OFFENDERS REVIEW COUNCIL

This is a statutory body (Correctional Centres Act 1952 (NSW)) comprised of 8 people. The Council is responsible for the management of 417 inmates (12 females and 405 males) who have been classed in any of the following ways:

1. as a Serious Offender
2. as a Public Interest Inmate
3. convicted of an Escape Offence
4. designated as either a high or moderate security risk
5. wishing to appeal a direction segregating him or her for a period in excess of 14 continuous days.¹³


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