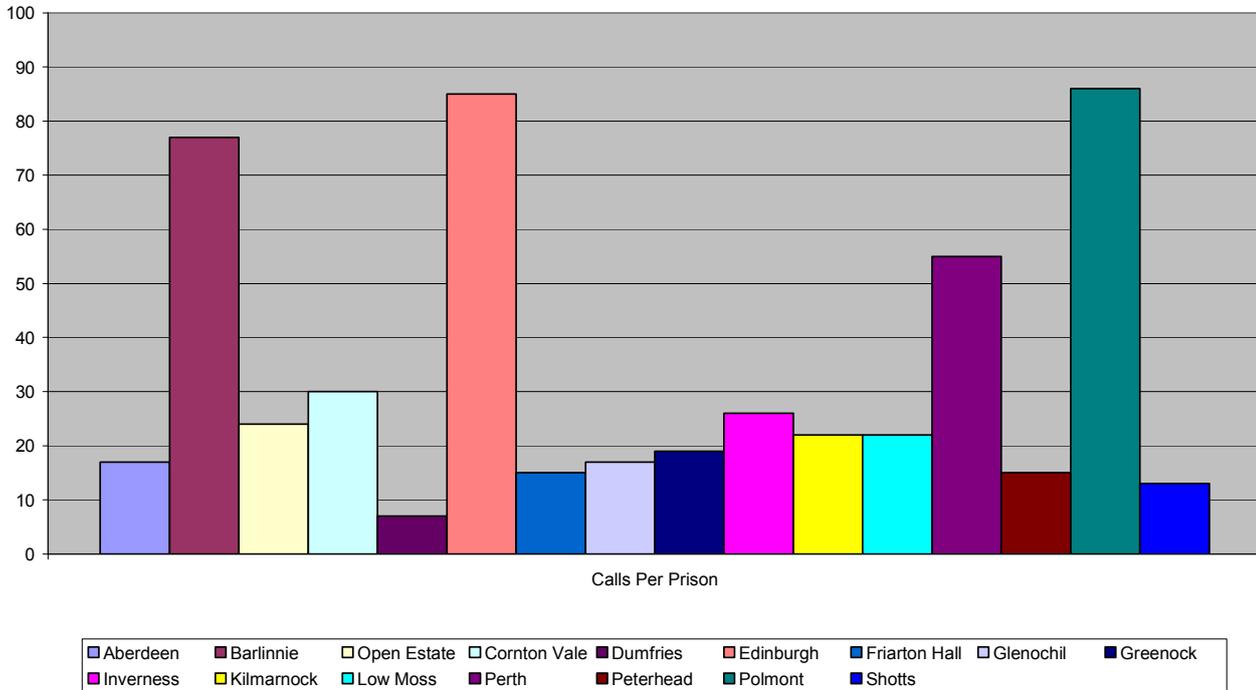


**Scottish Prisoners' Families Helpline
BI ANNUAL STATISTICS
October 2006 – March 2007**

October 2006 - March 2007



There has been an increase of **14%** in call volume to the helpline over this 6 month period, with calls to Polmont, Edinburgh, Barlinnie and Perth, perhaps not surprisingly forming **57%** of the total calls. There are a number of factors which could contribute to an increase in call volume:

- Families having greater exposure to helpline information due to prisons promoting the service
- Increased awareness amongst prison personnel of helpline support as a consequence of partnership working
- A rise in the prison population
- Introduction of initiatives relating to the family agenda including Home Detention Curfew, Integrated Case Management and Extended Home Leave

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Calls relating to **Mental Health** issues have been highlighted in our last two reports. The first report drew attention to the increased volume of calls around mental health, with the second report in March – September 2006, providing a statistical analysis and some comment on the impact for prisons, prisoners and their families. A report has been developed for the period March 2006 to March 2007, which takes an in depth look at calls received where mental health issues are central and the following themes have emerged:

- ❖ An increased number of prisoners with diagnosed social/emotional syndromes

- ❖ Families voicing their concerns about prison being the right place for their relative and the prison's capacity to manage them – the difficulties highlighted for both prison personnel and families managing a mental health problem in a prison setting.
- ❖ Issues around remanded prisoners (possibly with mental health, drug and/or alcohol issues) not being able to access optimum support through programmes and interventions because of their short or temporary situation.
- ❖ Family members often had expectations that, as a consequence of imprisonment, their family member would now be in a position to address their alcohol and/or drug misuse.
- ❖ Issues around elderly or vulnerable prisoners becoming confused and disoriented due to a change of circumstances.



Where possible the status of the prisoner is recorded and that could be pre-sentence, convicted, remanded, released and pre-release. For this exercise we have highlighted the remand or convicted calls and obviously only those prisons which house both types are represented in this instance. Out of the **375** calls relating to these prisoner types, **remands** formed **33%** overall. In this instance, where the other prisoner types have been taken out of the equation, calls around **convicted** prisoners are still forming the majority.

If we consider relevant prisons individually, 7 out of the 10 establishments contributing to the figures have less than 33% of calls relating to remand prisoners and their issues. However, this was not the case for figures relating to Perth Prison which showed over half of calls related to prisoners on remand. This anomaly could possibly be explained due to the larger population of remanded prisoners being held whilst awaiting the completion of the new accommodation.

It has been the experience of the helpline that remanded prisoners and therefore their families have different challenges from convicted prisoners due to the uncertainty of their position within the system and this in turn makes it difficult for prisons to deliver appropriate programmes and interventions to them.