



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS
INSPECTION OF HMP EDINBURGH 11-13 FEBRUARY 2004
SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The purpose of this inspection was to follow up points of note from previous inspections, to examine any significant changes, and to explore issues arising from the establishment's own assessment of itself. The focus was on the conditions in which prisoners live and on the way prisoners are treated.

- There had been no escapes since the last inspection.
- A major development of the estate is taking place.
- One new houseblock, Hermiston House opened on 1 July 2003. This is the most important new development since the last inspection and provides excellent living and working conditions.
- Conditions in two other halls are still very bad.
- Relationships between staff and prisoners were very good.
- Levels of violence had decreased in the prison and the new anti-violence strategy appears to be working well.
- Induction arrangements are excellent.
- For a large number of prisoners there is no opportunity to work.
- Progress has been made in developing a comprehensive pre release programme.
- The prison has not been successful in meeting the Sentence Management targets for prisoners awaiting transfer to long-term prisons.

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HM Chief Inspector of Prisons



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

HMP EDINBURGH

INSPECTION: 11-13 FEBRUARY 2004

LAST FULL INSPECTION 4-14 SEPTEMBER 2000



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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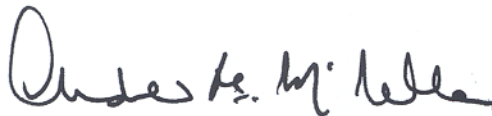
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The visit to HMP Edinburgh was made as part of a programme to visit every prison each year in which a full inspection is not being made. In the course of such visits the purpose is to follow up points of note from previous inspections, to examine any significant changes, and to explore issues arising from the establishment's own assessment of itself. It should not be seen as an attempt to inspect the whole life of the establishment.

1.2 The Inspection Team comprised:

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March 2004

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2. PREAMBLE

2.1 On 1st July 2003 Edinburgh Prison changed dramatically: it was on that day that Hermiston House was opened. It is by far the most important new development at Edinburgh since the last inspection: and it is very welcome.

2.2 The next full inspection will report in detail on Hermiston House. Even a follow-up visit, however, provides sufficient opportunity for observing how important good living conditions are for the morale of everyone. Staff have a sense of pride in working there, and prisoners are ready to recognise the quality of the living accommodation. Eight months after its opening the hall is clean and well-cared for. Every prisoner has access to toilet facilities. The cells are bright; the open areas are airy and well-used. Two hundred and eighty three prisoners live in Hermiston House: there are six whole prisons in Scotland with a design capacity smaller than that of Hermiston House.

2.3 Building has now begun on another large hall at Edinburgh prison. It is to be hoped, and it is expected, that the high standard of accommodation which will be provided when it is completed, will have the same encouraging effect on the morale of prisoners and staff.

2.4 In two other halls in Edinburgh Prison, however, living conditions are very bad indeed. It is good that the opening of Hermiston House has reduced the number of prisoners who are slopping out from 43% to 22%: but for the 22% slopping out is still their daily experience. The cells which have slopping out also have no electric power other than lighting; and often they are cells shared by two men, with almost no control over the choice of cell-mate. The contrast between the excellent living conditions in one part of this prison and the miserable living conditions in other parts is very striking.

2.5 Throughout the establishment prisoners and staff commented on good relationships. The identifying of the needs of prisoners and what they must do to address those needs is well done both with prisoners near the end of long sentences and increasingly with short-term prisoners; the Links Centre and the induction programme are other examples of good work. There is promise in new work to develop strategies of dealing with sex offenders, in a programme for job-hunting just before release, and in healthcare with regard to mental health and addictions: but it is too early to assess their impact. Next year's full inspection will

assess the success of the prison in providing more and better opportunities for all prisoners to use their time constructively. The task being undertaken to improve the quality of the food the prisoners eat is very important.

2.6 It is good to record that the level of assaults in the prison has dropped significantly: the anti-bullying strategy is very well constructed and managed. There had been no escapes since the last inspection. Relationships between staff and prisoners were very good: the Prisoner Survey, discussions with prisoners and staff, and observations all confirmed this.

2.7 Meeting individual and groups of prisoners forms a major part of an inspection. During this short follow-up inspection prisoners continually returned to two topics in particular. Healthcare and catering were criticised heavily. It is likely that these areas will be examined in detail during the full inspection of the prison planned for next year.

2.8 There are now no outstanding Recommendations or Points of Note from previous inspections which continue to give concern.

3. PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS AND POINTS OF NOTE

Recommendations

For Area Director/Governor in Charge

11.4 Sufficient resources should be restored to drug testing to enable it to discharge its dual roles of deterring drug misuse and as the only source of objective information about drug misuse in prison (paragraph 3.55).

The Unit has been fully staffed and has been achieving its targets for the 10% random monthly drug test with the exception of January 2004 where, due to demand for staff to provide escort cover the full target was not met. In November and in May 2003, no random testing was carried out on SPS instructions. In those months the focus was on testing liberations. At the time of the inspection the prison had an MDT target of 82% of prisoners tested to be clear of drug use and was achieving a rate of 75%.

11.5 Delivery of induction and risk/needs assessments for remand prisoners and protection prisoners requires to be brought up to the same high standards as are being achieved for mainstream prisoners (paragraph 5.14).

The delivery of induction and risks/needs assessments for remand prisoners have moved on considerably from the last full inspection. Arrangements have been made for all remand admissions (both adult and under 21) to be located on the second floor of Glenesk; although small numbers may be located on the bottom floor for reasons of physical infirmity or for addiction issues. On the morning after admission each remand prisoner is seen by a dedicated Remand Induction Officer from within Glenesk. The Short-Term Offender Needs Assessment/Community Integration Plan document (STONA) which has been piloted, amongst other sites, at Edinburgh is also being used for remand prisoners. This provides a common structure to each induction interview and also allows individual needs to be identified for action during the remand period. When the STONAs are completed they go to the Links Centre where any needs are identified and relevant arrangements made for contact by the other agencies outwith or within the prison. This is a very thorough approach which ensures that during the vulnerable period when individuals first come into prison a consistent

system is in place to both give induction information and identify needs. The induction information is backed up by an excellent package of information, including a locally-produced Glenesk information leaflet to inform prisoners about their entitlement and what is expected from them.

For prisoners whose first language is not English arrangements can be made for an interpreter to be brought into the prison. However, the Reception area at HMP Edinburgh has no information for those for whom English is not their first language, despite SPS printed information being freely available. This requires to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The situation for protection prisoners is worse than for other admissions. With the demolition of 'B', 'C' and 'D' halls, protection prisoners are now held in 'A' hall. There is no induction for protection prisoners admitted to 'A' hall. It was disappointing to learn that there were no plans to address this, despite the models of induction clearly working elsewhere in the prison. This decision should be reviewed.

11.7 There should be an advance menu system linked to a system of portion control (paragraph 7.17).

Achieved. A problem remains however with the poor quality of the food at the point of service. Management are looking at ways of addressing this.

Points of Note

12.2.2 Steps should be taken to find some way of upgrading the general standards of furniture and decoration in 'A', 'B' and 'C' Halls (paragraph 2.18).

The standard of furniture and decoration in 'A' Hall and Forth Hall is poor. Both, however, are due to be demolished; so it is not now feasible to expect major improvement in the interim. A modest programme of cell redecoration by prisoners is of some help.

12.2.5 Kit changes should be provided seven days a week (paragraph 2.23).

Outstanding issues regarding a shortfall in the provision of clean underwear at weekends have been resolved.

12.2.14 A system should be put in place to ensure that statistics on the operation of ACT within the prison are collected (paragraph 3.67).

Achieved. Statistics are collated in the Health Centre and kept on computer. They are sent to the Deputy Governor as Chair of the ACT Group, who then disseminates these to the National Act Forum.

12.2.17 The FPO should be guaranteed time off every week from his principal tasks to undertake his fire precaution duties (paragraph 4.34).

Achieved. At time of inspection, the Fire Prevention Officer was a full-time post.

12.2.20 A number of issues, as listed, need to be addressed to improve the quality of the education provision (paragraph 5.69).

Achieved.

12.2.25 A computerised medical record-keeping system should be introduced (paragraph 6.30).

Not achieved. Plans are in place to introduce such a system when the location for a new health centre is identified. The larger process of computerising records, rather than computerising record-keeping, will be introduced as part of a centralised SPS programme over several years. The introduction of the G-Pass system will represent part of this. This is an appropriate response to this point of note.

12.2.29 The staff training records should be used to identify staff who were not participating in any training activities so that appropriate targeted action might be taken (paragraph 9.35).

Achieved.

12.2.30 Consideration should be given to converting the main staff facility into a privately managed concern or to upgrading it to a standard that makes it more attractive to staff (paragraph 9.39).

Achieved.

4. NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Estate Development

4.1 Edinburgh was one of four pilot sites for the SPS Estates Development Plan Project. The commitment of SPS to improving the prisons estate and giving “an estate fit for purpose” is very clearly evidenced at Edinburgh where Hermiston House is now providing an excellent environment for prisoners and staff alike. Equally dramatically ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ halls and the previous Links Centre, gardens area and some estates facilities have now been demolished. The area is in the process of being fenced off as a second new houseblock is planned.

Hermiston House

4.2 Hermiston House opened on 1 July 2003. This very modern building has seven sections with integral sanitation and electrical power in all 226 cells. It replaces the now demolished ‘B’ and ‘D’ halls as well as housing the former ‘E’ hall enhanced status prisoners. Some cell sharing in larger cells allows for a capacity of 283 prisoners and the population has remained at, or close to, that figure. The introduction of Hermiston House means that 78% of prisoners in Edinburgh now have access to integral or night sanitation facilities compared with 57% at the last inspection.

4.3 Hermiston is very spacious both in terms of the communal areas and in the cells themselves. Prisoners also have the opportunity to dine in association. Recreation facilities are fairly standard, although there is a multi gym and a five-a-side football pitch and exercise yard.

4.4 The Hall has two observation cells and staff and prisoners noted that these were used on a frequent basis. A good addition to the accommodation are the large “buddy” cells which exist in each section. These house two prisoners if a need for company is identified. A disabled cell is also available.

4.5 Prisoners spoke very favourably about the new accommodation, especially those who had previously lived in one of the old halls. The only complaint was a minor criticism about the ventilation in the cells.

Induction

4.6 The opening of Hermiston House has allowed a dedicated induction area to be created in that area. Whilst the induction programme does not vary markedly from those to be found in other prisons, the degree of organisation and the enthusiasm of the staff involved is noticeable. Prisoners were also extremely enthusiastic about the experience. One feature of the induction process, which runs for one week commencing on the Monday after admission, was the role of the induction officer in contacting all new admissions on the preceding Thursday, to inform them about what will be happening. To date, 506 prisoners have completed the induction programme, with only one eligible prisoner refusing to participate. The STONA which was piloted at Edinburgh is at the centre of the induction.

4.7 A further feature of the induction process is the Friday morning session when members of the prisoner's family are invited to attend a joint session in the prison visit room, where staff give information about the prison, and to respond to questions and concerns. An extra visit is then given. The striking feature of induction at Edinburgh is the degree of organisation and the clear links which are made between induction and subsequent interventions. Feedback is also given to management on issues which arise allowing remedial action to be taken. The induction process at Edinburgh is an area of good practice.

Prisoner Activities/Employment

4.8 Prisoner employment in Edinburgh is going through a period of transition. The estates development and the demolition of some workshops has provided the opportunity to move away from production to skills acquisition. Staff are now qualified to assess prisoners in vocational qualification modules. However, on the last day of inspection there were 724 prisoners held in Edinburgh. Of these, 140 were untried adults and 55 were untried young adults and therefore not required to work. Sixty three prisoners were not eligible to work for reasons such as medical allocation; 65 were involved in domestic duties; 18 were participating in a programme; and 24 were attending a work placement in the community. Two hundred prisoners were working in the prison, leaving 159 who were not working. There are constraints on space because of the building work going on, but ways should be examined of improving on this.

4.9 One of the biggest inhibitors to activity is the almost daily closure of some areas because staff are needed for external escorting. The new escort contract rolls out this summer and staff and management in Edinburgh expressed their hope that this would allow more regime continuity.

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Violence

4.10 The anti-violence strategy which has been put in place in Edinburgh has contributed to a reduction in assaults and has made the prison a safer place for prisoners and staff. The initiative is very much welcomed.

Pre Release Programme

4.11 Although still at a very early stage, the 'Restart' Programme is a welcome addition to the Edinburgh activity profile. Initial feedback from prisoners has been very positive. Addressing issues such as CV Development, Internet Job Searches, Letter Writing, Completing Application Forms, Meeting with Job Centre Plus and Personal Portfolio Construction will help prisoners reintegrate into the community after a period in prison.

Sentence Management

4.12 As in so many Inspectorate reports, Sentence Management is an issue at Edinburgh. There are two distinct groups of prisoners to be managed. Firstly, long-term prisoners within Pentland hall, a national "top end" who are there as part of a Sentence Management Plan which will see them spend an average of two years at Edinburgh before moving on to open conditions (although many prisoners under the previous scheme will have served much longer at Edinburgh). Secondly, there are prisoners who are serving sentences in excess of four years and who are awaiting transfer to long-term prisons. On average these prisoners will stay at Edinburgh for about 17 weeks, although some will stay considerably longer. The prison is fully compliant in meeting the targets for those prisoners within Pentland Hall but has not been successful in meeting the targets for those prisoners awaiting transfer. Steps have recently been taken to address this issue.

4.13 At the time of inspection, local management indicated that under the new Performance Contract, Edinburgh proposes that it should only carry out the initial assessment of long-term prisoners awaiting transfer. In recent inspections of both Shotts and Glenochil,

frustration was expressed there that prisoners were coming from local prisons having done nothing (or very little) in respect of meeting the sentence management targets. This situation needs to be clarified. It may be reasonable for the sentence management process to begin at the long-term prison rather than in the temporary setting of a local prison. If this is the case SPS require to amend the current Sentence Management Guidance. It is clear that there is inconsistency in the application of the Sentence Management across the SPS.