



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

HMP PERTH

INSPECTION: 25-27 JUNE 2003

LAST FULL INSPECTION 7-11 JANUARY 2002



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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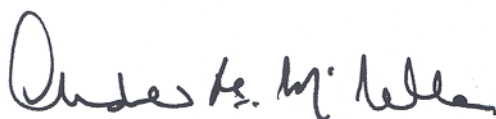
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The visit to Perth 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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August 2003

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HM CHIEF INSPECTOR OF PRISONS

2. PREAMBLE

2.1 At one time men sentenced to prison in South Fife courts would be sent to Edinburgh prison. Now Perth is the usual destination. This change has had a major impact on Perth prison. It has now joined the growing number of prisons where every aspect of prison life and prison management is affected by overcrowding. In Perth the worst overcrowding is in 'C' Hall, where the number of prisoners can approach 50% above the number the hall should hold. It is difficult to find fresh ways of saying in different reports that overcrowding is damaging for prison management, for prison staff, and most of all for prisoners. But it must be said, and it must be said about an increasing number of Scotland's prisoners. Staff numbers have not increased in proportion to increased number of prisoners. Nevertheless, this report shows that Perth prison does try to minimise the disadvantages to prisoners that overcrowding brings.

2.2 Conditions in 'C' Hall are bad: slopping out is also condemned in report after report, and it is condemned in this one. As long as slopping out continues, and as long as it is combined with cell-sharing (often with a stranger) and with long periods in cell, it will remain a disgrace and a disgrace that must be ended. A new building programme at Perth will begin soon: when the building work is completed conditions and opportunities in Perth prison will be changed dramatically. Nevertheless, it appears that it may still be some time before slopping out is ended. Conditions in 'C' Hall are better than they were, however: the installation of electric power in cells certainly makes a difference for the better. In most of the other halls the report shows that conditions are significantly better.

2.3 In the self-assessment which the prison prepared for this inspection it was acknowledged that there were not enough work places to meet the needs of the convicted prisoners. In particular, prisoners sentenced for less than six months have almost no access to work. Again it may only be when the new building programme, or at least the first part of it, is completed, that this situation can be properly addressed: but the lack of available and useful work places is a serious concern. On the other hand, there is evidence of real progress in the provision of programmes for prisoners. This report also recognises that the work of sentence management at Perth is of a high quality. The introduction of the new Short Term Assessment Tool may provide better opportunities and care for short term prisoners: but it is, as yet, too early to make a judgement.

2.4 It was good to discover that many points raised in the previous inspection have been addressed. In particular, improvements to the reception area are to be welcomed, although the area still falls short of what would be hoped for (see paragraph 3.10). Improvements have also been made in conditions and arrangements for visits. Points made about healthcare have been addressed as well.

2.5 The Prisoner Survey, discussions with prisoners and staff, and observations made during the inspection all suggest an atmosphere in Perth prison which is built on humane and relaxed relationships. This is also true of Friarton Hall. Some time was spent in Friarton during this follow-up inspection: but it does not receive detailed attention, since there were no major issues arising from previous reports to be followed up.

3. ASSESSMENT

Safety

Overcrowding

3.1 Perth, like a growing number of other establishments, has a significant overcrowding problem. This is a particular issue amongst the short-term convicted population in 'C' Hall. The overcrowding in Perth has been exacerbated by the allocation of prisoners from South Fife Courts to Perth from HMP Edinburgh in May 2002. As well as the sheer numbers involved there is also the effect of an increase in the number of escort destinations and the increased complexity of the prisoner mix. On the first day of inspection there were 693 prisoners being held against 593 available prisoner places. All of this overcrowding was located in 'C' Hall.

Escorts

3.2 The impact of the arrival of prisoners from South Fife has also had a significant impact on escorting requirements: a 35-40% increase in commitment. Compensation for staff has taken the form of emergency payments, although the uptake has been patchy so the prison has been forced to limit the regime by closing work places.

Escapes

3.3 There had been no escapes since the last inspection.

Violence

3.4 There has been an increase in prisoner on prisoner violence in Perth. In 2002-03 there were 14 serious assaults against a KPI target of 5. This is up from 7 in 2000-01 and only 4 in 2001-02. The problem has been most acute amongst the remand and short-term prisoner groups and the conclusion from research recently undertaken by the prison is that a

significant percentage of the violence is related to issues unresolved from outside prison. There had been 1 prisoner on staff assault, against a KPI target of 1.

Preventing Self Harm

3.5 There had been no suicides, 10 attempted suicides/para suicides and 6 incidents of self harm since the last inspection.

3.6 The organisation and delivery of the strategy to prevent suicide in the prison is impressive. The ACT Co-ordinator has maintained a high degree of enthusiasm and commitment to this important task supported by management and staff. There are currently eight trainers. In addition the establishment has a robust Listener Scheme currently functioning with seven Listeners.

3.7 There were however two main issues. The first is the need to maintain the momentum to ensure that operational staff in particular undergo core training in ACT. While the high prisoner population makes this more difficult, it also makes it more necessary. At the time of the inspection the figure for core trained staff was 76% and this must be increased if the high standards are to be maintained. The second issue relates to the structural design of Reception area. While there has been a marked improvement in Reception as a result of refurbishment and the nurses' room is very satisfactory, it is a challenge for reception staff to interview prisoners in the current cubicles to assess suicide risk. If a prisoner is considered at risk there is not a suitable holding area. This arrangement should be addressed

Relationships

3.8 The SPS Prisoner Survey and observations and discussions during inspection confirmed that relationships between staff and prisoners were very good.

Anti-Bullying Strategy

3.9 Whilst a published Anti-Bullying Strategy exists there was little evidence of its application on a consistent basis. The strategy is under review and when this has been completed the document should be well publicised within the prison.

Reception

3.10 The Reception area was criticised in the last Inspectorate report. It is encouraging therefore that the area has been re-organised and redecorated since then. Although the flow of prisoners has increased, the area is now much more suited to its purpose. Staff are also coping well with the new demands. As outlined earlier, an area of concern remains that the initial interview of new admissions, including ACT, is undertaken in the holding cubicles with an officer standing at the door. This not the best way to make a valid assessment of a person's risk of self-harm. A way should be found for this interview to be managed more discretely.

Orderly Room

3.11 The Inspectorate observed two Orderly Room hearings. All the requirements of the Prison Rules and Orderly Room Guidance were met, and the proceedings were undertaken in a relaxed and informal manner.

Decency

Accommodation

'A' Hall

3.12 'A' Hall had been refurbished at the time of the last inspection and continues to offer good accommodation. The Hall houses remand prisoners and the protections being held there last year have now moved out.

'B' and 'D' Halls

3.13 'B' and 'D' Halls house long-term mainstream prisoners. They are both located within one refurbished traditional galleried Hall. Until recently 'D' Hall was considered a progression from 'B' Hall but this has now lapsed and the two Halls fulfill basically the same function. The reason for this change was the high number of admissions of "difficult"

prisoners from other establishments and the desire by local management to spread the load rather than have everyone in the one place.

3.14 Both Halls were clean, tidy, bright and airy. The atmosphere was relaxed and most prisoners were at work during the day. The attendance pattern for staff consisted of very long shifts with meal breaks mid morning and mid afternoon. This resulted in any prisoners left in the Hall being locked in their cells during staff meal breaks morning and afternoon. The position is exacerbated in the evening. Prisoners not attending recreation, which is in an area adjacent to the Hall, are locked in cells while staff undertake other duties. Disabled access to the recreation area was also very difficult. A disabled prisoner on the bottom of 'B' Hall is in effect restricted to staying there and being locked in his cell in the evening. It is also very difficult for disabled prisoners to access the exercise yard. It would be desirable, if staffing allowed, for a system to be found for prisoners to have association in the evening in the Hall or to at least be able to access showers and telephones.

'C' Hall

3.15 The major change in 'C' Hall has been the installation of electric power in cells. The cells still lack access to sanitation during lock up periods: as long as this continues 'C' Hall cannot be called "decent". A feature of the Hall is continued overcrowding. As well as STP's, the Hall holds the overflow of remand prisoners, young adults, a range of protections, long term admissions and long term downgrades (mainly from the Open Estate). Approximately 30 convicted prisoners were attending the work shops during the inspection. No work is routinely offered to prisoners serving less than 6 months

3.16 The Hall itself is dismal, although it is kept clean and some refurbishment has taken place. The recreation area is spartan, its most attractive feature being access to telephones. A real attempt is being made to give prisoners time out of cell, although the need to manage such a mix of prisoners makes this even more difficult. If prisoners are not at work or at recreation, they are generally locked up. The location of two telephones in Recreation means that they cannot be accessed during the day as they could if they were on the landings.

‘E’ Hall

3.17 There have been no significant changes in ‘E’ Hall since the last inspection. Although an old building, it is kept clean: but it is dilapidated with poor facilities. Every opportunity is given for prisoners to have time out of their cells, and during periods of lock-up there is access to sanitation. The atmosphere in the Hall was relaxed.

Friarton Hall

3.18 In Friarton Hall there have been some developments in the prisoner population. Some life sentence prisoners are now located there, as are some prisoners serving sentences of over twelve years. It is perhaps too soon to form a judgement on the effect of this change, although some prisoners and prison management spoke positively about it. Despite this change, the average length of stay of a prisoner in Friarton is as short as four months: and this may present difficulties in providing stable and consistent preparation for release. It has not yet proved possible, despite attempts, to bring sex offenders from Peterhead to Friarton as part of their preparation for release: it is very much to be hoped that the attempt will not be abandoned.

3.19 Friarton was not the subject of a detailed inspection: but some general observations can be made. The prison was clean and tidy; and the meal which was being served was hot, of generous portions and tasty: food in Friarton is highly regarded by prisoners. The wood workshop has been welcomed in previous reports: but there are now expressions of concern that the work is not sufficiently varied, and is very much tied in to the procuring of adequate contracts for this kind of work. The outdoor recreation facilities are particularly good.

3.20 Previous inspection reports have noted positive and relaxed relationships between prisoners and staff at Friarton: there appeared no reason to think that this has changed.

Catering

3.21 Phase 1 of the proposed estates development includes plans to build a new kitchen facility. That is to be welcomed. In the short term however, the prisoners toilet area was dirty with toilet rolls and towels strewn on the floor. This should be addressed.

3.22 The four weekly menu choice was still in place with prisoners choosing two weeks in advance. The menus had been revised in March of this year and three options were available for lunch and dinner, with one of these always being a vegetarian option. Special diets were catered for, but the practice of attaching a ‘post it’ label on the tray of special diets should be examined: in windy or inclement weather there is the possibility of this being blown off or removed.

3.23 Despite the menu change in March to reflect better prisoners’ preferences, a major complaint throughout the prison was the quality and quantity of the food – supported by views expressed in the 2003 SPS Prisoner Survey. Since the last inspection, when the temperature of the food at point of delivery was reported as being poor, nine new heated trolleys had been purchased and were in use for ‘B’ and ‘D’ Halls. They do not seem to have made much difference to quality, although the food is hotter.

3.24 The catering operation was observed by members of the Inspectorate Team. The food was of good quality in the kitchen at point of cooking. However, after the food had been placed in the trays (both the new and original trays), and then in the trolleys it could stay there for up to two hours before reaching prisoners. The quality of the food at point of delivery was much poorer than in the kitchen – even in the new trolleys. While efforts have been made to improve the transportation of food from kitchen to Halls, it needs further work and consideration.

Social Work

3.25 Since the last inspection, the Social Work Unit had been successful in employing an additional Social Worker to work with long term prisoners in Friarton. That is to be welcomed.

3.26 The Unit continues to deal mainly with the processing of statutory requirements of LTPs although it seemed that statutory work associated with STPs was on the increase. Some one-to-one work is also carried out although pressures elsewhere mean that it was somewhat limited.

3.27 The problem with the fire door being locked from the outside has now been addressed, through the installation of a double lock. It is important however that a check is still made each morning, from the Social Work side of the door, to ensure that it can be opened at all times.

Race Relations

3.28 There was one Race Relations Manager and two Race Relations Officers in place. The duties were additional to other main duties and this seems to be appropriate for the needs of Perth Prison. None of the three had received formal training for the role although the prison had nominated one for the proposed SPS/CRE training at the College: training which was subsequently cancelled.

3.29 There was no Race Relations Monitoring Group in place and no one-to-one meetings with ethnic minority prisoners took place (as suggested in the last inspection report). Although an interpreter had not been required over the last year, they can be called if required. The information pack offering translations was not immediately available.

3.30 There were 17 prisoners identified as being from an ethnic origin during the inspection. One of these prisoners had special dietary needs which were being met. No complaints had been received in the last 12 months.

3.31 In general, because there had been no complaints or issues during the last 12 months (and for some time before that), there was little by way of structure in place. While no problems had arisen it is important that the issue is not sidelined or treated with complacency, and that prisoners continue to have access to the RROs, interpreters, translation pack and any other specific requirements.

Visits

3.32 The Visitor Centre, located just outside the prison is now open 1400 – 1700 hours at weekends. However, it is used by only a small number of visitors. Notices have been produced and information is available on the electronic notice board within the prison.

3.33 The visits themselves continue to be extremely busy but are not supervised in an excessive manner. All visitors have a rub down search, and are asked to open their mouths and lift long hair. This was carried out in a relaxed and decent manner. The policy of strip searching every prisoner has stopped and one in five are now subject to a random search. Visitors who were spoken to had no complaints about their treatment.

3.34 The role of the Family Contact Development Officer has still not been clarified or developed. Plans were in place to separate the role whereby a Visit Contact Officer (VCO) will handle routine queries on visit times, travel arrangements, etc., and the FCDO will make constructive use of family members in the Sentence Planning process. It is planned that the roles would move from the Operations Group to either Regimes or Residential. This is a particularly difficult issue, but the plans should be discussed with all of those concerned and the problems sorted out as quickly as possible. The role of FCDO should not be allowed to drift.

3.35 The acoustics in the closed visits area have been improved.

Health Care

3.36 Arrangements for health care in the prison continue to be very good. The majority of the suggestions made in the last Inspectorate report have been addressed. There is nevertheless, still an opportunity to build on what has been achieved as well as taking action on some suggestions not yet acted on.

3.37 Last year's Report noted that the ward area left a great deal to be desired in terms of allowing quality clinical care as well easy monitoring of prisoners. Since then some attempts have been made to improve the area but they do not go far enough. It seems that these concerns will be addressed in Phase 2 of the development plan for the prison which is due to start in 2005. Some further improvements need to be made in the short term. For example, one of the two available showers was out of order. The fitting of the one remaining shower (for the disabled) was poorly done. Food for the patients was stored in the corridor for want of a proper storage area. It would not be unreasonable to provide a suitable pantry area, and fit one, or preferably two, new showers.

3.38 Other changes revolve around the proposed Vulnerable Prisoner Unit (VPU) which lies empty. At present the prison has a Day Care Unit (DCU) on the first floor of the health centre. The staff in this Unit run separate groups for vulnerable prisoners (for example those who are not coping with life in prison) and prisoners with mental health problems. If the VPU were opened it would allow the DCU to be dedicated to looking after prisoners with mental health problems. The dedicated mental health nurse could then interview prisoners in this unit as opposed to in their cells. It could also serve to provide any appropriate ongoing support to prisoners when they come off ACT. In addition it would also allow the practitioner nurses with RMN qualifications to make use of their skills in an environment dedicated to mental health. Moreover, the pressure on mental health services in the prison would in our view justify the employment of an additional dedicated mental health nurse. If this were done this nurse could also have input to the VPU.

3.39 Since the last inspection changes have been made to the prison's medical arrangements. From the information provided, it seems that a medical officer had been asked to leave. For several months thereafter, until just before this visit, medical cover had been difficult to maintain at an appropriate level and lacked continuity. This had resulted in more than 50 written complaints in one particular month. From discussions with two of the current medical staff, and with the health care manager, it seems the position has improved. Nevertheless, it is clearly a situation which requires to be monitored.

3.40 There is a proposal for the doctors and nursing staff to introduce and run jointly chronic disease management clinics. This is something to be encouraged.

3.41 Arrangements for the upkeep of medical records; arrangements for the pharmacy; and dental care are all good. Concerns raised last time about the psychiatric services being stretched and difficulties in obtaining admission to medium secure psychiatric beds had been addressed. Psychiatric sessions have increased and beds in the medium secure unit of Murray Royal Hospital are accessible.

3.42 There is a heavy workload imposed by the need to provide methadone and detoxification drugs. A new health care manager has been appointed since the last inspection.

Crime Prevention

Induction

3.43 Perth has identified the need for a “Links” Centre in common with other establishments, and although a bid for funding to develop one failed, local management identified an area adjacent to B Hall which has been refurbished and reconfigured to provide an excellent centre for Induction and Throughcare. Perth is also piloting the Short Term Offender Needs Assessment and community Integration plan (STONA). This provides an excellent means to ensure that assessment of STP’s takes place, and that a baseline of needs is established to inform future planning for interventions and a structured Induction Process.

3.44 Short Term Admissions are seen within a target time of 72 hours (although in practice this is bettered and they are seen within 24 hours). Prisoners serving very short sentences will be seen in the Halls, while those serving longer sentences come to the Centre. Although it is mainly prison staff who deal with them in the Centre, the plan is that other agencies will increasingly make use of the facility. Three staff currently provide the induction service.

Sentence Management

3.45 Long Term prisoners are managed using the SPS’s Sentence management Scheme. While the prison operates a system of Personal Officers, it is staff within the regimes function who carry out Risk and Needs Assessments. The system seems to work well with a sample of records revealing compliance with key dates and appropriate annotations. Of the prisoners managed by this Scheme, 46 had missed compliance dates at some point, with 44 of the 46 missing compliance dates at other prisons. It is encouraging that 72% of prisoners responding to the SPS Prisoner Survey “Agreed”, or “Strongly Agreed” that Sentence Management was of value.

Throughcare

3.46 The new Links Centre provides the focus for throughcare as well as Induction. Cranstoun Drug Services provide the Assessment for all those with addiction issues, although

Induction/Throughcare staff complete the initial record to avoid duplication. All referrals to other agencies are now being directed through the Centre. While there is still inevitably some duplication, the system appears to be working. Appropriate partnerships are being developed, and Jobcentreplus has just increased its commitment with the appointment of a full-time adviser to work in the prison. While a previous partnership with APEX has been discontinued, a pre-release interview for all prisoners has replaced the Pre-release Courses previously run.

Programmes

3.47 The prison met its KPI target for programme delivery in the last year. However, the system for running and prioritising programmes had been somewhat ad hoc, but recent restructuring had led to a more systematic approach. The introduction of the 'Short Term Offender Needs Assessment and Community Integration Plan' (STONA) will provide further information which in turn will inform decisions about what areas require interventions. There is ongoing concern about the low number of STP's accessing programmes and the almost complete absence of Remand Prisoners involved. "Taster" sessions have been run to encourage participation and the prison is planning to introduce "First Steps" and "Action for Change" as additional approved activities. The programme KPI has been doubled for this Reporting Year.

Addictions

3.48 A total of 68 prisoners were receiving methadone and a further 88 supervised medication (of whom about 80% were on a detoxification regime). The Mandatory Drug Testing rate was 72% negative against a target of 78% in the year preceding the inspection.

3.49 Cranstoun Drug Services are now well established in the prison with a team leader plus four staff working in co-operation with three SPS Addictions Officers. An Addictions Nurse had been appointed but was not in post at time of inspection. The two groups share a portacabin and as a result the Cranstoun Team feels well integrated into addictions response. The Addictions Officers will shortly move to a newly refurbished area which will become a dedicated Addictions Centre. The intention is to have both administrative and classroom

areas available for the management and delivery of addiction services. This is a very appropriate response to what clearly remains an area of concern.

3.50 Cranstoun routinely attend the Links Centre to see admissions. The improved access to interview facilities and the relaxed atmosphere in the Centre were commented on favourably. Cranstoun receive referrals from the Health Centre, from a range of staff and from prisoners themselves. In turn they refer internally to the Health Centre and the Addictions Team. Here, the appointment of an Addictions nurse has been a positive development. There is little in place for remand prisoners, this will be a focus in the coming year. As part of transitional care, Cranstoun refers on to among others, APEX, Cyrenians, and to drug, alcohol and counselling services in a variety of areas.

Access to Regime

3.51 In the last Inspectorate report there was disappointment at the level of access to constructive activity for short-term prisoners. Unfortunately the situation is now even worse. It now the practice in Perth that no prisoner serving 6 months or less is allocated to a work party. Those serving between 6 months and 4 years go to the Work Allocation Centre (WAC) to await a suitable vacancy. The WAC is a dreary place to spend any time, still less the weeks which some prisoners have to spend before they are allocated a job. Their “assessment” during the visit took the form of drawing pictures and then colouring them in.

3.52 Perth has plans to build a whole new activities complex but in the short-term something needs to be done to address the deficiencies in the regime for STP’s. The introduction of the Short-term Assessment Tool (STAT) and the improvements in induction are now better quantifying the needs of prisoners. But that is only the beginning of the process and Perth has much to do address those needs. In the month prior to the visit, (May 2003), 54 prisoners had been liberated but no Community Integration Plans had been developed, reviewed or passed to an outside agency.

3.53 The long-term and remand population on the other hand is fairly well served. It was pleasing to see the amount of time prisoners on remand spent out of their cells compared to other remand halls in other prisons. They had access to the gymnasium and education and there were also good gym facilities within ‘A’ Hall itself for prisoners. The LTP population

has the focus of the sentence management system and they seem to get priority over the STP's for the better jobs and programme places in the prison.

Education

3.54 Despite the suggestion in the last inspection report that “closer links could be established between education and industry and generally access to education could be improved”, progress is patchy. The situation regarding Prisoner Learning Hours has been resolved to the point where the target for last year was exceeded.

4. RESPONSE TO POINTS OF NOTE

13.2 The interview area in reception should be moved to accommodate a SPIN computer and sufficient space to conduct assessments in privacy (paragraph 5.11).

There is no SPIN computer available in the interview room although a terminal is available within the Reception itself. Reception has been redeveloped and rooms created that allow interviews to be conducted in private.

13.3 A fire evacuation plan for the Health Centre should be produced (paragraph 5.14).

A fire evacuation plan is now in place.

13.4 A fire evacuation plan for the administration area should be introduced (paragraph 5.17).

Fire evacuation plan produced and now in place.

13.5 Arrangements for the locking of the fire door in the Social Work Office should be remedied as a matter of urgency (paragraph 5.20).

This has been addressed, although it is still important that a check is made on a daily basis, from inside the Social Work Office, that the door can be opened.

13.6 There is no evidence of Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work following the implementation of SAS, and this should be addressed (paragraph 5.23).

Risk Assessments have been completed on most operational areas, with some being reviewed following further changes to attendance patterns.

13.7 The hospital/ward area is unsatisfactory in terms of design, space, privacy, treatment and facilities (paragraph 6.6).

The ward area is still unsatisfactory. The prison intends to address this in phase 2 of its development plan due to commence in 2005, but improvements need to be made before then.

13.8 An extra computer and two printers should be provided for administrative staff in the hospital (paragraph 6.7).

These have been made available, but the computer requires to be linked to the network.

13.9 The doctors should have access, from their surgery, to medical information now available on the Internet (paragraph 6.11).

Access to the Internet is now available to the doctor on request.

13.10 The issue of access to local psychiatric beds should be examined (paragraph 6.25).

There are now arrangements in place to access psychiatric beds in the medium-secure Unit of Murray Royal Hospital.

13.11 The number of psychiatric services should be reviewed, with a view to increasing them (paragraph 6.26).

Murray Royal Hospital has recruited a fourth Forensic Psychiatrist and the establishment now benefits from an additional session. Arrangements are very satisfactory.

13.12 Ways should be explored to achieve the implementation of the principles of clinical supervision for nursing (paragraph 6.40).

A Review of nursing services has recently been carried out. Clinical supervision featured in this Review and SPS is moving towards formal implementation of the recommendations. However, the goal of appropriate clinical supervision has not yet been achieved.

13.13 The introduction of administrative support to the programmes unit would free up staff to more appropriately deliver interventions (paragraph 7.8).

Administrative support to the programmes unit is now in place.

13.14 The worksheds are in urgent need of renovation (paragraph 7.14)

A new industrial complex will be provided in the next development phase of the prison, which commences in September 2003.

13.15 Consideration should be given to opening the Visitors Centre at weekends (paragraph 7.17).

The Visitors Centre is now open Saturday and Sunday from 14:00 to 16:00

13.16 There is considerable scope for information about the Visitors Centre to be transmitted to visitors (paragraph 7.18).

In line with weekend opening, notices have been placed within the visitors waiting area both at HMP Perth and Friarton Hall. Leaflets have also been produced, and information is posted on the electronic notice board. New signs have been ordered to advertise and direct visitors to the Visitors Centre.

13.17 Acoustics in the closed visiting rooms are poor and should be addressed (paragraph 7.23).

Acoustics in the closed visiting rooms have been upgraded. The number of agents visiting rooms has also been increased by four and a direct dial facility has also been provided.

13.18 The role of the Family Contact Development Officer should be reinvigorated (paragraph 7.24).

The establishment has reviewed the role of the FCDO and a proposal has been made to distinguish between a Visit Contact Officer (VCO) who will provide basic information on visit times, travel arrangements etc, and the FCDO whose role will be developed to make constructive use of family members in the Sentence Management Process. This proposal needs to be addressed sensitively.

13.19 Prison management should take steps to integrate education more into the planning and policy-making procedures of the prison (paragraph 7.31).

The Head of Education attends the Heads of Departments meetings to enhance integration and communication with other functions.

13.20 Closer links should be established between education and industry (paragraph 7.32).

No closer links with industry could be identified. There is ongoing discussion as to how to link the SVQ requirement in the workplace with education.

13.21 Access to education should be improved (paragraph 7.32).

Provision is in place for all prisoners to access education, including protection prisoners

13.22 The Learning Centre is working under capacity in terms of prisoner learning hours, which should be addressed by the Learning Centre staff, the education contractor and prison management at local and national levels (paragraph 7.34).

The Learning Centre is now working at or over capacity and exceeded the KPI learning hours figure for year 2002-03. The figure for year to 2003-04 is below what the Learning Centre expect to achieve.

13.23 The library should be redeveloped into a multi-media learning Centre (paragraph 7.35).

Additional computers have been installed in the library area. Further developments are planned but are linked to the long term establishment development plan.

13.24 The interview rooms in the halls are inadequate (paragraph 7.38).

The new phase 1 development plans have dedicated interview rooms, which should alleviate the problems created by the current design of the halls.

13.25 The Race Relations Liaison Officer should institute regular one-to-one informal meetings with all the prisoners from ethnic minorities (paragraph 7.42).

This has not happened, although the Race Relations Officer is available on demand. Contact with all prisoners from ethnic minorities is made on admission.

13.26 The issue of transporting food from the kitchen to the halls should be reviewed, to ensure that heat loss is kept to a minimum (paragraph 7.54).

New trolleys have been provided and have been in operation since late May 2003. The quality of food at point of delivery is, however, still poor.