



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

HMP & YOI PERTH

INSPECTION: 5-6 DECEMBER 2006



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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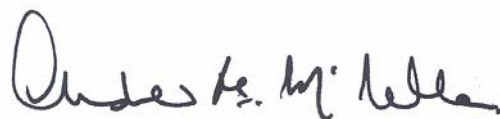
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The visit to HMP & YOI Perth was made as part of a programme to visit every prison in the year following a full inspection. In the course of such visits the purpose is to follow up points of note from the full inspection, 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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2. PREAMBLE

2.1 Since there are so many prisoners in Scottish prisons, prisoners have to be moved around wherever the places are to be found: more and more prisoners have to be kept far from home and family. The large SPS rebuilding programme which is being undertaken also involves complicated movements of prisoners while one hall is knocked down and another built. Perth prison is in the middle of this constant movement: it is overcrowded and one hall has been knocked down while the new hall taking its place is not yet open. A splendid new activities area has been opened and provides a very good environment for prisoners' work and training; as well as an excellent laundry and a new kitchen

2.2 This sense of change and movement is reinforced by the changing nature of the prisoner population. Four years ago there was a mixture of long-term prisoners, short-term prisoners and prisoners on remand in Perth. Now the short-term prisoners are few in number: most short-term prisoners from Tayside are transferred to Low Moss, with consequent travelling difficulties for their families. Meanwhile the remand population continues to increase. The report of 2005 drew attention to the absence of useful activity for prisoners on remand. In every prison this is limited, because of the policy of giving priority to convicted prisoners; but it is good to report that some modest provision is being made in Perth for prisoners on remand who want to work.

2.3 Most prisoners in Perth share cells. Cell-sharing is one of the worst consequences of overcrowding. However, overcrowding can be so bad in Perth that three prisoners often have to share a cell. This is a threat to privacy, decency and safety. So is the dormitory for six people, although it is only used in emergencies. There has been some redecoration and refurbishment since the last inspection. One hall, 'E' Hall, however, is very bleak. The cell furniture there is either damaged or missing, and the paintwork in the cells is shabby. It is expected that this hall will soon be demolished as part of the rebuilding programme; but it offers grim living conditions at the moment.

2.4 The prison continues to be safe in the midst of all this upheaval. The evidence of all prisoners met confirms the statistical evidence that the level of violence is decreasing.

2.5 Within the last year Friarton Hall has become a Young Offenders' Institution, providing 89 top-end places for Young Offenders arriving from Polmont. The report shows that the transition in the use of Friarton Hall has been a real success. Another success has been the improvement in food. At the time of the inspection in 2005 a change was taking place in the way food was being served. The early hopes of improvement then have been fulfilled. All sources of evidence demonstrates that the meals are much better than they were.

3. PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS AND POINTS OF NOTE

Six Recommendations and 58 Points of Note were made in last year's full inspection report. Progress as follows:

Recommendations

Implemented	3
Partly Implemented	3

Points of Note

Implemented	32
Partly Implemented	14
Not Implemented	12

RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The poor conditions in the dormitories in 'E' Hall should be improved as a matter of urgency (paragraph 2.24).

Partly implemented. The large dormitory is only used when it is absolutely necessary. Some new furniture has been fitted although the quality of the wardrobes is poor. The walls have been decorated but it is still bleak. The smaller dormitory is cramped and dingy, although prisoners have personalised the room to some extent. The quality of the accommodation in the dormitories is still very poor.

11.2 The poor living conditions in 'E' Hall should be improved as long as prisoners live and staff work there (paragraph 2.26).

Partly implemented. Some improvements have been made. Communal areas, and some cells are cleaner and have been decorated. Repairs have also been made to the floors. The closure of 'E' Hall is an urgent need.

11.3 An Addiction Strategy Group, chaired by a senior manager, should be set up (paragraph 4.1).

Implemented.

11.4 Better systems of communication relating to prisoners with mental health problems should be put in place across the SPS (paragraph 6.16).

Partly implemented. A Mental Health Nurse from HMP Perth is now based at the Open Estate. A more proactive approach is also taken with prisons which send prisoners to Perth and to the Open Estate. Prisoners are informed of the services available, particularly the limitations in the Open Estate. Occasionally an assessment will be undertaken in the sending prison prior to arranging a transfer. However, prisoners are still transferred to Perth and the Open Estate who have difficulty coping with the move.

11.5 Prisoners should be able to access their work parties (paragraph 7.13).

Implemented. Work parties are no longer closed because activities officers are redeployed to other duties.

11.6 The catering arrangements in the main prison should be improved (paragraph 9.19).

Implemented. Since the last inspection a new kitchen has been built and serveries have been created in all of the residential areas. The improvement in the food is significant.

12. POINTS OF NOTE

12.1 The prison should stop the practice of holding three prisoners in a cell in ‘A’ Hall (paragraph 2.4).

Not implemented. However, current practice ensures all other available accommodation is occupied before three people are required to share a cell.

12.2 All remand and protection prisoners in ‘A’ Hall should be held in decent conditions (paragraph 2.6).

Partly implemented. ‘A’ Hall has been redecorated and some furniture and mattresses replaced. Although removable mattress covers have been purchased in an attempt to improve hygiene not all prisoners were being issued with them or indeed were using them when issued. This means that some prisoners are still required to use sub-standard or dirty mattresses.

12.3 The telephone and recreation facilities in ‘A’ Hall should be improved (paragraph 2.8).

Not implemented. A bid had been made for new canopies for the telephones. However, some telephones did not have them and the canopies which were in place were so small that they offered no privacy. The range of recreation equipment was unchanged.

12.4 Arrangements for maintaining basic hygiene in ‘A’ Hall should be improved (paragraph 2.9).

Implemented. Time is now available to maintain hygiene, and cleaning materials are available.

12.5 The prison should continue to monitor levels of inter-personal violence in ‘A’ Hall (paragraph 2.10).

Implemented. There has been a reduction in the number of assaults over the past year.

12.6 The prison should review the appropriateness of remand, short-term and long-term prisoners from ‘B’ and ‘D’ Halls exercising together (paragraph 2.17).

Partly implemented. ‘B’ and ‘D’ Halls now exercise separately. Remand and convicted prisoners still exercise together.

12.7 Old and unsuitable mattresses in ‘D’ Hall should be replaced (paragraph 2.21).

Partly implemented. See paragraph 12.2.

12.8 Prisoners in Friarton Hall should be allowed more time out of their cells (paragraph 2.35).

Implemented. Friarton Hall now holds Young Offenders. When these prisoners arrived a new regime was introduced. The arrangements are in keeping with the enhanced status that these prisoners have earned.

12.9 The prison should consider providing hot food and drinks to visitors to Friarton Hall (paragraph 2.36).

Implemented. Vending machines are available during normal visits sessions. Hot and cold drinks are available. During the “Parenting Visits” sessions tea and coffee are offered to visitors prior to their tour of the prison.

12.10 The Electronic Control Room should be replaced or refurbished as a matter of urgency (paragraph 3.6).

Not implemented. Plans for this have not been finalised, although various options have been considered. The timing of this remains urgent as the upgraded facility needs to be operational before the new residential hall opens.

12.11 A central file of completed prisoner complaint forms should be created, and all complaints submitted by prisoners should be entered on the SPS Prisoner Record System (paragraph 3.9).

Implemented. An impressive new system has been introduced. This provides an audit trail of a prisoner's complaint as well as very useful management information on complaints by topic and by area.

12.12 A clear set of Orderly Room operating procedures should be communicated to all managers (paragraph 3.10).

Implemented. All managers who adjudicate in the Orderly Room have been appropriately trained. Non-operational managers no longer carry out this duty. SPS Orderly Room Guidance is available.

12.13 A system of monitoring the consistency of Orderly Room procedures should be put in place (paragraph 3.11).

Implemented. The Orderly Room is now carried out by two senior managers. This has allowed a more consistent approach to be taken.

12.14 Consideration should be given to re-introducing the structured day care regime in the Health Centre for prisoners in the Segregation Unit (paragraph 3.13).

Implemented. Each prisoner located in the Segregation Unit has a needs assessment undertaken and can access all services available in the prison if required.

12.15 The urine testing process for drugs should be reviewed (paragraph 4.6).

Partly implemented. Healthcare Assistants now carry out urine tests for clinical purposes. The arrangements are not as rigorous as the MDT procedure, although if nursing staff suspect that a prisoner is trying to manipulate a test result they can request a suspicion test under the MDT process.

12.16 The interview room in the Reception should be used for all prisoner interviews (paragraph 5.2).

Partly implemented. All new admissions are interviewed in Reception. Prisoners returning to the prison from court are interviewed in the hall. An interview room is available for those prisoners who are considered vulnerable or who do not speak English as a first language. The interview room does not have a SPIN computer which means that personal details are still taken at the reception desk, in public view.

12.17 The scheduling of escorts from the principal courts to the prison should be improved (paragraph 5.4).

Partly implemented. Regular meetings between Prison and Reliance management have led to an improvement. However, there is occasionally a problem from courts in Dundee and Kirkcaldy.

12.18 The practice of “double-cuffing” all prisoners on escort should be reviewed (paragraph 5.6).

Implemented. However double cuffing appears still to take place as a matter of routine.

12.19 The system of identifying vacant cells in the prison should be improved (paragraph 5.7).

Implemented. Hall managers identify vacant accommodation and inform reception on a daily basis.

12.20 Provision should be made for hot drinks and hot food to be provided to prisoners who require to have their meal while in reception (paragraph 5.8).

Partly implemented. Hot meals are now available. Hot drinks are not.

12.21 Prisoners should have the opportunity to shower before attending court (paragraph 5.9).

Not implemented. The regime does not allow time for showering before going to court. Prisoners due for a court appearance are given the opportunity to shower the night before.

12.22 Prisoners admitted on a Friday or during the weekend should not have to wait until the Monday for their induction (paragraph 5.12).

Partly implemented. A local induction sheet provides basic and immediate information until the individual is able to attend on the next available induction day.

12.23 A range of service providers should be involved in delivering induction (paragraph 5.13).

Implemented.

12.24 The practice of administering the Core Screen Assessment to prisoners who will be held in the prison for periods of less than one week should be reviewed (paragraph 5.14).

Implemented.

12.25 All remand prisoners including remand prisoners on protection should receive a structured induction programme (paragraph 5.15).

Partly implemented. Remand prisoners now go to the Links Centre for induction on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Protection prisoners are offered induction on a Wednesday. This means that a protection prisoner could be in the establishment for up to seven days before receiving the full induction package.

12.26 Activities in the Links Centre should be developed (paragraph 5.18).

Partly implemented. The Links Centre has been relocated to the new Activities Complex. More service providers and employers are now attending. However, progress has been hampered by the change of prisoner population. There are now more untried prisoners, fewer long-term convicted prisoners and very few short-term convicted prisoners.

12.27 Consideration should be given to developing a more structured approach to pre-release (paragraph 5.19).

Not implemented. There is still no pre-release programme, although one is planned for 2007.

12.28 Better use should be made of the current space available in the health centre (paragraph 6.1).

Implemented. Unused offices and other rooms now provide facilities for Integrated Case Management meetings. The upstairs area has been converted into a drug testing area.

12.29 The current system of supervised administration of medication should be improved (paragraphs 6.4 and 6.22).

Implemented. Dedicated dispensing stations have been created in most halls. Prisoners from 'A' Hall are still escorted to the health centre to be issued their medication. The arrangements are much better.

12.30 Health care staff and officers should work together to raise awareness of the benefits of prisoners receiving health care in the health centre rather than in the halls (paragraph 6.5).

Implemented. Healthcare staff now have a 15 minute input to induction. Notices are also posted around the prison informing prisoners about healthcare initiatives.

12.31 The current skills mix within the health centre should be reviewed (paragraph 6.6).

Implemented. A review was completed in March 2006. Additional nursing staff have been recruited and the balance of the team is now more suited to the needs of the prison. Consideration is currently being given to recruiting a learning disabilities nurse.

12.32 The lack of access to mental health services at weekends should be addressed (paragraph 6.13).

Implemented. The Mental Health Team still do not work at weekends. However, Mental Health Nurses who work outwith the dedicated Mental Health Team provide a point of contact for prisoners requiring support at weekends. More acute cases can also be referred for assessment or transfer through the contract with local psychiatric services.

12.33 Consideration should be given to providing prescriptions to long-term prisoners on a fortnightly or monthly basis (paragraph 6.21).

Implemented. There are now fewer long-term prisoners in Perth. Each case is judged on its own merits, although there has been no increase in fortnightly or monthly medications.

12.34 Steps should be taken to stop prisoners stockpiling medications (paragraph 6.23).

Implemented. A self-ordering system has been introduced. Prisoners order medication only when required and cross-checks are carried out.

12.35 Compliance with the timescales for reviewing prisoners' medication prescriptions should be improved (paragraph 6.24).

Implemented. The Healthcare Manager now cross-checks audits. Remedial action is taken as required. Prescriptions are now checked more rigorously.

12.36 Prisoners taking methadone should only have one prescription Kardex (paragraph 6.24).

Not implemented. The prison feels that the logistics of methadone prescribing drives the need for the two prescription Kardex system.

12.37 There should be a proactive follow-up of prisoners refusing initial educational assistance once they have established themselves in the prison (paragraph 7.5).

Not implemented. A paper based recording system is in place. Few prisoners get a second chance.

12.38 The transfer of prisoners' initial educational assessment and learning records to the forwarding establishment should be done timeously (paragraph 7.6).

Implemented. Monthly audits are now carried out.

12.39 The prison should consider providing additional art classes (paragraph 7.7).

Not implemented. The reduction in the prisoner population has led to fewer classes.

12.40 The prison should consider providing more full-time education (paragraph 7.7).

Not implemented. The prison does not consider it desirable to provide more full-time education at the moment given the transient nature of the Perth prisoner population.

12.41 More evening classes should be made available (paragraph 7.7).

Not implemented. Given security cover needs the new Activities Complex closes at 5.45pm. There are no other facilities currently available for evening classes.

12.42 SMART action should be recorded and a subsequent quality improvement plans produced as part of the annual staff self-evaluation exercise (paragraph 7.9).

Not implemented. This issue has been raised with the service provider. There has been no change.

12.43 There should be formal recording and certification of employability skills that are being delivered and developed (paragraph 7.14).

Partly implemented. A system has been introduced in Friarton Hall.

12.44 The library should make available current periodicals, magazines and music loans (paragraph 7.17).

Implemented. Periodicals are now available on a monthly basis. These are held in the library and in Reception. Specific requests can be made to the librarian.

12.45 Prisoners should be involved in the acquisition of library stock (paragraph 7.19).

Implemented. Suggestion notices are now available in the halls and in the library.

12.46 There should be a strategic partnership between the learning centre and library for provision of resources to support learners (paragraph 7.19).

Implemented. Support is coordinated by the librarian. There is also an “easy reading” section in the library. Access to the “Dear Dads” DVD’s is also available through the library and there is liaison with the education unit who provide the DVD’s and the technology.

12.47 The arrangements for booking visits for remand prisoners should be improved (paragraph 8.3).

Implemented. The visits booking line is now available from 09.30-12.00hrs as well as in the afternoon. Visit spaces have also been re-allocated to remand prisoners to reflect the increase in that population.

12.48 Access to Physical Education facilities should be improved (paragraphs 8.8 and 8.9).

Implemented. A change to staff attendance patterns has led to an increase of 6.25 hours in the PE timetable per week.

12.49 Prisoners should be able to work towards a range of SVQ modules (paragraph 8.12).

Partly implemented. Convicted and remand prisoners can access Scottish Progression Award modules in plumbing, bricklaying, painting & decorating and joinery.

12.50 The social work manager should attend ACT meetings (paragraph 8.18)

Implemented. The Social Work manager now attends these meetings as a matter of routine.

12.51 All social workers should have a SPIN terminal (paragraph 8.19)

Implemented.

12.52 The prison should take the opportunity provided by the building work to offer practical work, perhaps contributing to a qualification, to prisoners (paragraph 9.4).

Partly implemented. Some of the painting and decorating work in the new Activities Complex and the redecoration of 'E' Hall was undertaken by prisoners who had been trained in the prison.

12.53 All prisoners should be given the opportunity to choose their meals in advance (paragraph 9.16).

Not implemented.

12.54 A Catering Committee where prisoners can be consulted on the food should be established (paragraph 9.18).

Partly implemented. There is no Catering Committee in place, although a Catering “Suggestions Book” is located at each servery. Catering Officers are also regularly in the halls to supervise the issuing of meals. Informal feedback is received at these times. Prisoners’ perception of the quality of the catering service has improved significantly in the last year.

12.55 Senior Managers should taste the meals in the kitchen or in the halls every day (paragraph 9.18).

Implemented. A system is now in place and managers submit daily reports.

12.56 A complaints book should be held in the kitchen (paragraph 9.18).

Implemented. A “Suggestions Book” is held at each servery. Catering Officers review these books as required.

12.57 Old and worn clothing should be replaced when necessary (paragraph 9.22).

Implemented. Individual hall managers are now responsible for the clothing budget for prisoners in their area.

12.58 The choice of items available from the canteen should be improved (paragraph 9.25).

Implemented. Notices are posted in the halls asking for suggestions. New items have been added in the last year.

4. NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Friarton Hall

Since the last inspection Friarton Hall has changed function and now operates as a national ‘top end’ facility for young adult prisoners. This has been managed very well. The atmosphere in Friarton Hall is very relaxed and positive. It is to the credit of staff and prisoners that the change has been so smooth.

There is “full employment” in a variety of wood based industrial workshops, horticulture, wing cleaning and the kitchen. The young adults also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of work placements in the community.

New Hall Serveries

A new servery was opened in ‘A’ Hall during the last inspection. The improvement at that time in the presentation, quality and quantity of food was apparent. All of the halls now have similar serveries. The improvements are no less marked. Prisoners spoke very positively about the improvements in the meals. The SPS prisoner survey supports this feeling:

The figure is the percentage of those who said okay, good or very good about food	2005	2006	Improvement
The size of portions	32	51	19
The temperature of the food	49	57	8
The way in which food is served	45	75	30
The condition of the food when you get it	42	58	16

New Activities Complex

An impressive new Activities complex opened in the Spring of 2006. There are some snagging issues to be resolved and the complex is not yet fully operational. The building will provide work places in joinery, bricklaying, painting & decorating, hairdressing, plumbing, industrial cleaning and horticulture. Not all of these activities were in place during this inspection.

The Complex also houses a new kitchen, a training kitchen, laundry, education unit, Links Centre and office accommodation and interview rooms for Programmes staff, Psychologists and the Addictions Unit.