



Independent Prison Monitoring (IPM) Findings Annual Report

Prison:
HMP Perth

Year (1 April – 31 March):
2025 – 2026



Annual Monitoring Figures

		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Total number of visits:	55	54	57
	Total number of missed weeks:	0	1	0
	Total number of prisoner requests received:	75	75	71
	Total number of IPM hours:	275	270	286

Executive Summary

Over the reporting year, Independent Prison Monitors (IPMs) reported that HMP Perth generally operated in a calm and ordered manner, with staff–prisoner interactions most often described as respectful, courteous, and proportionate.

Reception processes were generally observed to function efficiently, although prisoners reported dissatisfaction about a lack of notice when being transferred to other prisons. Property, medication, and liberation processes were handled competently by staff.

Standards relating to decency were broadly met, with the prison environment typically observed to be clean and orderly, supported by prisoner work parties and staff oversight. Food provision was generally viewed positively. However, IPMs reported major concerns around overcrowding, particularly the ongoing use of single-occupancy cells for two prisoners. Concern was also expressed by IPMs and prisoners that prisoner wages had not increased since 2012, against a backdrop of rising inflation and canteen prices. Concerns were also reported about delays in issuing basic items such as clothing and kit bags.

Personal safety arrangements were observed to be strong, with visible anti-bullying information and consistent use of the SPS suicide prevention strategy Talk-To-Me. The operation of the Separation and Reintegration Unit (SRU) was repeatedly described as calm and well managed.

Purposeful activity remained a strength, with a wide range of work, education, training, gym, and religious activities observed. Prisoner access to visits of varying types was assessed positively. Nevertheless, access to activities was uneven, with cancellations and reduced availability linked to staffing constraints and regime changes.

Transitions from custody into the community were observed positively with examples of multi-disciplinary risk management, employment pathways, and recovery service links. At the same time, reported delays in social work engagement affected progression for some individuals.

General Observations

Standard 1: Lawful and Transparent Custody

Across the year, IPMs observed the reception functioning effectively, including during busy periods involving court admissions and transfers. Staff were seen to manage paperwork, property and medication well, with good communication. IPMs reported examples of good practice, such as producing dyslexia-friendly notices, and ensuring prisoners were liberated with their prescribed medication.

However, reported information from prisoners highlighted inconsistencies relating to this Standard. Some prisoners transferred at short notice described frustration at not being informed with enough notice. Prison management pointed out that often little notice was possible due to the requirement to maintain space at the prison for nightly admissions, and responding to nationally directed redistributions of the prisoner population. Prisoners also reported delays in receiving kit bags, clothing, and other induction materials.

Population pressure remained a significant backdrop, with high numbers of prisoners sharing cells designed for single occupancy during the Napoleonic wars. IPMs acknowledged this reflected estate-wide pressures.

Standard 2: Decency

IPMs consistently observed the prison to be clean, supported by prisoner work parties and regular cleaning routines. Meals were observed to be hot and varied, and prisoners reported improved satisfaction with clothing provision as the year progressed.

Nevertheless, structural limitations in some halls persisted. Prisoners reported difficulties related to the limited number of electrical sockets in cells, particularly where cells designed for single occupancy were shared. This restricted the simultaneous use of basic appliances (TV, Gaming Console, Vape Charger, etc.), raising concerns about comfort. Population pressure resulted in continued cell sharing, which compounded these issues.

Kitchen staff reported feeling stretched due to staffing shortages and expressed concern about managing dietary requirements, including allergies, safely.

Standard 3: Personal Safety

Throughout the reporting year, IPMs observed visible measures supporting personal safety, such as information on the SPS anti-bullying strategy, and the application of Talk-To-Me, including routine checks on how people were feeling. The Talk to Me process was observed being initiated appropriately, with staff demonstrating empathy and proactive engagement.

Standard 4: Effective, Courteous and Humane Use of Authority

Throughout the reporting period, IPMs observed staff exercising authority appropriately. Prisoner escorts, cell searches, and removals were carried out calmly, with minimal force and clear communication.

In the SRU, prisoners reported being treated well. It was observed to be clean and tidy. IPMs confirmed that prisoners located there received regular visits, although family visits were not permitted for SRU prisoners. While the Unit was reportedly full a lot of the time, IPMs were assured that all prisoners had management/re-integration plans in place.

Standard 5: Respect, Autonomy and Protection Against Mistreatment

IPMs routinely observed, throughout the establishment, staff engaging with prisoners respectfully and helpfully, fostering good staff prisoner relationships. IPMs described the prison environment generally as calm and orderly.

IPMs discussed changes to the new regime, brought in as part of a national changes to regimes and staff rostering early in 2026, with both staff and prisoners in all halls, with the consensus being that it was an improvement, for varying reasons. IPMs saw examples of the helpful information communicated to prisoners regarding regime changes.

IPMs dealt with some prisoner requests relating to the SPS complaints process but did not report any concerns about the process itself. Issues reported by prisoners tended to be isolated individual issues.

Standard 6: Purposeful Activity

IPMs observed strong provision of work, education, gym, religious, and vocational opportunities, including accredited courses and highly regarded training initiatives. IPMs reported positively on the prison's library service.

Different prisoner groups, including prisoners on protection, were observed to be engaged in work and other purposeful activity, as well as having access to time in the fresh air. Prisoners were often engaged and motivated and received formal recognition for their work. Relationships with instructors and officers were seen to be positive. However, it was reported to IPMs that staffing shortages resulted in the cancellation of some work sessions, shortened sessions, and limited evening activity.

While there was some confusion among some prisoners about the process and rules for booking visits, IPMs observed visits taking place which were busy and held in a friendly atmosphere. IPMs observed a range of visit types taking place including family visits and virtual visits. Assurance was also given that all categories of prisoner would continue to have equality of access to visits following the implementation of a new regime timetable, as part of the national changes.

Standard 7: Transitions from Custody into the Community

IPMs observed effective multi-disciplinary Risk Management Team (RMT) meetings, including clear evidence of prisoners engaged in the process and being given the opportunity to express their views.

IPMs also reported that there were positive examples of release preparation, including employment links such as the impressive Greene King initiative, recovery services, and building self-confidence. Information about how to access various services were clearly on display around the prison, supporting continuity between custody and community.

However, IPMs heard some cases where prisoners' progression was hampered by limited social work capacity, leading to delays in, for example, parole paperwork being made available on time. While this was concerning, at the time of writing this report IPMs were made aware that social work provision had been approved for an uplift in budget to increase capacity.

Standard 8: Organisational Effectiveness

IPMs spoke with some staff about organisational effectiveness, and how they felt in their role. Some staff commented that staffing pressures had diminished consistency in the delivery of some elements of the regime, and therefore prisoners' time out of cell.

Later in the reporting period IPMs spoke to managers and front-line staff, including union representatives, about the implementation of the new regime and staff roster system. Around 73% of the work force had voted for the new system of working hours. It was believed that these changes would be good for prisoners in terms of better access to various elements of the regime, thereby addressing the earlier concerns reported above.

Standard 9: Health and Wellbeing

IPMs were informed of acceptable waiting times for some healthcare services (for example a four-week wait to see a GP and a two-week wait for substance use services). However, for some services waiting times seemed long. The wait for routine mental health support was at one point in the year reported to be around twenty-five weeks. This was viewed as 'better than in the community'. The wait time for acute mental health cases was reported to be a lot shorter. Staff triaged mental health appointment requests, and those with the greatest need were rightly prioritised. The wait for routine dental appointments was twenty-two weeks, higher than in the community. The wait for psychology services was reported as being seven months. Positively, there was no reported waiting time for primary care services delivered by nursing staff.

Several prisoners complained to IPMs that their evening medication was administered too early (i.e. in the afternoon) which could make them feel drowsy in the early evening.

IPMs reported that the winter flu vaccination programme had been delivered across the prison with no issues.