



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

Report on HMP Perth

December 2005

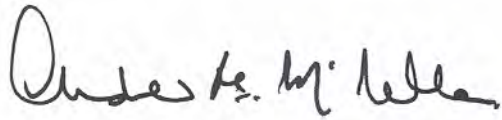


SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

The Scottish Ministers

In accordance with my terms of reference as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, I forward a report of a full inspection carried out at HMP Perth between 3-7 October 2005.

Six recommendations and a number of other observations are made.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew R C McLellan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

ANDREW R C McLELLAN
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
for Scotland

December 2005

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1. PREAMBLE

1.1 Slopping out has now ended in Perth. The chair of the Visiting Committee described it as “a milestone”. Last year’s inspection report called the conditions in ‘C’ Hall “dreadful”. It is very good that this Report is able to acknowledge that slopping out ended on 10 June 2005. It is also good to recognise that for some months before that those prisoners who were still slopping out were not sharing cells.

1.2 People who do not know prisons well sometimes find it difficult to understand why slopping out is not ended overnight. The answer is, in part at least, to do with overcrowding in prisons: there simply is no room to move prisoners out of “slopping out cells”. While the process of ending slopping out at Perth has been complicated in terms of moving prisoners around, this report recognises the determination and energy which the prison has put into the project; and recognises that this achievement has been well managed.

1.3 Nevertheless, some prisoners are still living in very poor conditions. Some cells, particularly in ‘A’ and ‘E’ Halls, need decoration very badly. Some cells have little furniture, and what furniture there is is often broken. Mattresses are old and thin and often do not look clean. In these poor conditions there can be three prisoners sharing one cell. The doubling up of prisoners on the scale it is found at Perth is, certainly in part, a consequence of emptying ‘C’ Hall to end slopping out. Not attributable to this, but still constituting poor conditions, is the practice of keeping six prisoners living together in a bleak dormitory room in ‘E’ Hall.

1.4 Another consequence of the welcome ending of slopping out by the closure of ‘C’ Hall is that over one hundred short-term prisoners who would normally be held in HMP Perth are now held at HMP Low Moss near Glasgow. The implications of this for their families have been raised in the HMIP Report on Low Moss (2005).

1.5 All of this prisoner movement has not simply been for the purpose of ending slopping out. It is also in response to large-scale rebuilding. The average number of prisoners has dropped sharply, from 681 in the four month period prior to the last inspection, to 480 at the time of this inspection. At the same time the number of prisoners on remand has increased sharply. So the increase of the proportion of prisoners on remand has been very rapid. On

the Friday before the inspection, out of 488 prisoners 187 were on remand: i.e. 38%. At the time of the last full inspection in 2002 the proportion was less than 20%. This has been matched by a decrease in the number of short-term prisoners. This inspection did not find clear evidence of planning for the needs of this increased remand population.

1.6 The inspection also found a lack of planning at different levels in several areas of the life of a prison which must be maintained, whether or not such large changes are taking place. Proper provision for a high number of remand prisoners; clear induction and throughcare procedures for all prisoners; a properly co-ordinated and managed approach to addiction services: these are examples, and there are others in the report, where staff must take ownership.

1.7 The SPS Prisoner Survey shows that food in Perth is considered by prisoners to be among the worst in the SPS. Inspection reports in the past have been critical of the food. It is surprising, therefore, that there is not more evidence of senior management sampling the food in the kitchen and in the halls. There is no doubt that the method of delivering the food to the halls in sealed trays in heated trolleys makes the food worse at the point of serving. During the inspection a change was beginning with the introduction of a servery in one hall. Early responses from prisoners were good. With regard to fresh fruit, it is possible, by choosing every available option, for a prisoner to have ten pieces of fruit per week.

1.8 Friarton Hall was finding it difficult to make a significant contribution to the preparation of prisoners moving to the Open Estate: most prisoners were only spending a short time “passing through”. Different possible uses of Friarton were being discussed by prisoners and by staff. Prisoners living there found it difficult to describe that part of their sentence as in any way useful.

1.9 Every prisoner group said they felt safe in Perth prison. The statistics show a significant reduction in the number of violent incidents in the prison. Previous inspections found evidence of very good relationships between prisoners and staff at Perth: this inspection found the same.

2. POPULATION, ACCOMMODATION AND ROUTINES

Population

2.1 Perth holds male adult convicted long-term prisoners, male adult and under 21 remands, and a small number of male adult short-term prisoners. The prison has a design capacity of 449 and is contracted to hold 461.

Accommodation and Routines

'A' Hall

2.2 'A' Hall is the main remand facility for the prison. It also houses a mix of protection prisoners: remand, short term convicted and long term convicted. The hall capacity is 171 and 169 prisoners were held on the first day of inspection.

2.3 The hall was upgraded in 2000 and now includes integral sanitation and Electric Power in Cells (EPIC). It has 75 cells spread over four floors. There is cell sharing throughout the hall. Fifty cells hold two prisoners and 23 hold three. There is one disabled cell and one anti-ligature cell.

2.4 The cells holding two prisoners are quite cramped. Those with three are extremely cramped. There is no privacy in the three bedded cells and prisoners said they are claustrophobic and the air quality bad, especially when cell mates smoke. Smokers and non-smokers regularly share although staff did say they tried to keep them apart whenever possible. The prison should stop the practice of holding three prisoners in a cell in 'A' Hall.

2.5 The cells on floors 2, 3 and 4 are in a dreadful condition. There is graffiti on the walls and ceilings, chunks of plaster have fallen off and the standard of decoration is poor. There is little or no furniture in most cells. Many mattresses are old, soiled and out of shape. All cells have kettles and televisions.

2.6 Efforts are being made to try and improve conditions, starting on the ground floor and working up. Walls on the ground floor have been painted, mattresses changed and furniture

acquired from 'C' Hall, which was closed earlier in the year. Although the furniture is second hand, the difference between the cells on the ground floor and the cells on the other floors was striking. All remand and protection prisoners in 'A' Hall should be held in decent conditions.

2.7 On the week of inspection prisoners had started to collect their meals from a servery on the upper two floors. This is much better than the 'plated meal' system in operation in the rest of the prison. Work was underway to install serveries in the other halls: the total cost for all of the serveries is around £312,000. Prisoners in 'A' Hall still have to take their meal back to their cell to eat it. If there is no table or chair in the cell meals are eaten sitting on the bed. There is no communal eating in 'A' Hall.

2.8 There are eight telephones in the hall, two on each floor. The level of privacy for prisoners on the telephone is not good: the telephones are in communal areas and the canopies around them offer little insulation from background noise. Recreation facilities are provided in two side rooms adjacent to the main accommodation areas. The recreation facilities are basic: pool tables, table tennis and a large screen television. The walls are drab and in need of decoration. The telephone and recreation facilities in 'A' Hall should be improved.

2.9 Prisoners said it was difficult to maintain a decent standard of personal hygiene in 'A' Hall. Most had to wash their underwear in their sink because there was never enough from the laundry for everyone. Some also said that this situation was made worse by the fact that it could take more than a week to have personal items which had been handed into Reception returned. Although there are sufficient showers, prisoners said it was difficult to get to them because of regime restrictions. Arrangements for maintaining basic hygiene should be improved.

2.10 Rather than all prisoners going outside for exercise at the same time, as they did until recently, there is now a sessional system in place. Prisoners exercise in smaller numbers. Time spent out of cells has also been reduced: staff say that this is a result of inter-personal rivalries and feuds from outside being carried over into the prison. CCTV has been installed in the hall to help tackle this. The prison has also started using an Inter Personal

Violence Report and intelligence gathered inside and outside the prison to predict high-risk situations. The prison should continue to monitor levels of inter-personal violence.

'B' Hall

2.11 'B' Hall holds a mix of male remand and convicted prisoners. Until quite recently the hall held long-term prisoners in single cells, but the closure of 'C' Hall led to the current arrangements. The hall capacity is 93 and 75 prisoners were held on the first day of inspection: 61 remand prisoners, 13 short term convicted and one disabled long-term prisoner (for health reasons).

2.12 The hall is the bottom two galleried floors of a large hall which was refurbished in 1997 to include integral sanitation and EPIC. (The upper two floors house 'D' Hall). It has 63 cells. Thirty three cells are singles (including one disabled and two high risk cells), and thirty cells are doubles. The single and double cells are the same size. The cells holding two prisoners are cramped.

2.13 The standard of decoration and cleanliness throughout 'B' Hall is better than in 'A' Hall. However, the prison will have to work to maintain standards if the current mix of prisoners is to continue. Anecdotally staff said that remand prisoners cause more damage and care less about maintaining standards of cleanliness.

2.14 Recreation facilities are located in a room adjacent to the hall. The room is functional. It has pool tables and table tennis as well as a large screen television. There are two telephones in the recreation room that can only be used during recreation. There is also one telephone on each of the two floors. There is little privacy on the telephones.

2.15 There are six showers on each floor. These were clean and in good condition. The hall itself was also bright and clean. This is helped by a light colour scheme. Although there was building work taking place in the hall, (fitting a new servery), this work had not had an adverse effect on the cleanliness of the area.

2.16 Prisoners collect their meals from a central point and return to their cells to eat. Not all cells have a chair and in double rooms space is very limited. Prisoners therefore have to

sit on the bed to eat their meals. There is no communal eating. At the time of inspection 'B' Hall prisoners were served their meals in plastic trays ('plated meals'). The standard of the food was criticised by prisoners.

2.17 Prisoners in 'B' and 'D' Halls exercise together in a yard adjacent to the hall. The increase in the number of remand prisoners means that remand, short-term convicted and long-term convicted prisoners now exercise together. Although there have been no significant problems so far, the prison should review the appropriateness of this arrangement.

'D' Hall

2.18 'D' Hall houses mainstream long-term prisoners. The hall capacity is 69 and 68 prisoners were held on the first day of inspection.

2.19 The hall is located on the two floors above 'B' Hall. and was upgraded in 1997 to include integral sanitation and EPIC. It has 67 single cells. It also has two high-risk cells and one double cell which are not included in the capacity.

2.20 The hall is very similar in design to 'B' Hall (described above): six showers on each floor; two telephones in the recreation room and two in the hall; and pool, table tennis and a TV. There is little privacy when making a telephone call. The recreation room is spacious and was reasonably clean.

2.21 The colour scheme in 'D' Hall is much darker than that in 'B' Hall and it gives the hall a gloomy look. The hall was clean, although some of the cells were in need of redecoration. Old and unsuitable mattresses should be replaced.

2.22 Hall prisoners were still being served their meals in plastic trays. They are required to eat in their cell which at least had a chair and a counter. There is no communal eating in 'D' Hall. Building work had started to put a servery in the corner of the hall, and it is expected that this will be in use before the end of 2005.

'E' Hall

2.23 'E' Hall holds a mix of short-term and long-term prisoners who have progressed from the mainstream system and are waiting for a transfer to a 'top-end' or are approaching

liberation. The hall capacity is 82 and 80 prisoners were held on the first day of inspection. The hall is due for demolition at the end of 2007 as part of the establishment's Development Plan.

2.24 The hall is old. It is situated on two floors at the south end of the prison. It is divided into three wings and has 73 single cells, one three person dormitory and one six person dormitory. The conditions in the two dormitories are dreadful. The short-term prisoners who act as wing cleaners live there. The dormitories are very old and cramped. The standard of decoration is very poor and the bedding and furniture is not in good condition. **It is recommended that the poor conditions in the dormitories in 'E' Hall are improved as a matter of urgency.**

2.25 The long-term prisoners live in the 73 single cells and have keys to their own doors so that they can access toilets and showers during the night. All cells have EPIC. Groups of cells of various numbers are separated by grille gates for control purposes.

2.26 Because of the proposal to demolish 'E' Hall there has been limited investment in the fabric and fittings over the last few years. However, prisoners still have to live and staff have to work there. **It is recommended that the poor living conditions in 'E' Hall are improved as long as prisoners live and staff work there.**

2.27 The one exception to this lack of investment was that the hall was having a servery installed while the inspection was taking place. The quality of food was highly criticised by prisoners. Some expressed confidence that things would improve in the move away from plated meals to the servery.

2.28 Prisoners are able to sit at a table in a dining room to eat their meals if they want. However, there is not a great take up of this opportunity. Prisoners prefer to take their meals back to their cell. At least they have the choice.

2.29 The hall has a large recreation room, which includes snooker and pool tables. Telephones afford better privacy than in other halls because they are in wooden kiosks. 'E' Hall prisoners occupy most of the better jobs in the prison. This means that the hall is fairly quiet during the day. Prisoners have the freedom to walk all around the inside of the hall

except during patrol periods. One of the features of the hall is a large well-stocked aquarium, which is maintained by the prisoners.

Friarton Hall

2.30 Friarton Hall is a national ‘top end’ facility for long-term prisoners awaiting transfer to open conditions or approaching the end of a long sentence. It takes prisoners from Perth, Kilmarnock, Shotts and Glenochil. The hall capacity is 89 and 88 prisoners were held on the first day of inspection.

2.31 Friarton is located approximately one mile from the main prison and is almost self sufficient from the main prison as far as prisoners are concerned: it has its own workshops, visit room, gym facilities and education unit. It has 20 single cells, 33 double cells and one three person dormitory. All cells have EPIC and a television with access to terrestrial channels.

2.32 The cells are drab, and the double cells are cramped. Many of the prisoners who arrive at Friarton, particularly those from Perth, Kilmarnock and Shotts will experience cell sharing for the first time as a long-term prisoner.

2.33 There are four telephones in kiosks in the centre of the accommodation area. They are not accessible during lock up periods as grille gates are used to separate rooms into smaller zones. The recreation room doubles as the dining room. Satellite television is available in the recreation room, but not in cells.

2.34 The difference in prisoners’ perception of the catering arrangements between the main prison and Friarton was dramatic. The quality and quantity of food in Friarton was good – despite the fact that the same staff prepared it and the same raw ingredients were used as in the main prison. This demonstrates the deterioration which takes place in the trolleys and plastic trays and the benefit of serveries in the halls.

2.35 As a result of a recent change to staff attendance patterns, prisoners now have 11 hours per week less time out of cell than they had before. This is very disappointing and

not what one would expect in a regime prisoners have worked hard to get to. This should be addressed.

2.36 The visit room is spacious and well decorated. It was good to hear that in fine weather visits can be taken in the grounds next to the entrance to the prison. There are vending machines providing sweets and cold drinks. The prison should consider providing hot food and drinks to visitors: some will have travelled a long way.

2.37 There was some uncertainty amongst staff and prisoners about the future use of the site although this was not impacting on the very positive relationships observed.

3. CUSTODY AND GOOD ORDER

Security and Safety

3.1 There have been no escapes in the past year.

3.2 In 2004-05 there were 22 serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults against a target of 10. There had been three serious assaults in 2005-06 to time of inspection. There were 72 minor prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in 2004-05 and 47 in 2005-06 to time of inspection. There had been no serious prisoner-on-staff assaults in 2004-05 and none in the year to date. There had been 14 minor prisoner-on-staff assaults in 2004-05 and 13 in the year to date. The inspection took place six months into the reporting year, and indications were that levels of violence were on the decrease.

3.3 An Inter Prisoner Violence Report (IPVR) is now being used to monitor the levels of violence. Links have also been formed with local police in an attempt to identify prisoners who may cause a problem for themselves or for others. More control measures have also been introduced to 'A' Hall. While it will take time for these measures to start to make an impact, early indications are that they are having an effect.

3.4 There were two deaths in custody in the year prior to inspection (subject to Fatal Accident Inquiries). Since April 2005 there have been eight instances of self harm.

3.5 Relationships between staff and prisoners were very good, as reported in the SPS Prisoner Survey. The rating increased from 93% to 97% between 2004 and 2005.

3.6 As the accommodation and workshops are refurbished, it is important that other parts of the prison are not left behind. The Electronic Control room should be replaced or refurbished as a matter of urgency.

3.7 The introduction of the Escort Contract has gone well in Perth. There are regular meetings between managers and these have helped to sort out any problems. This has been particularly important because Perth was reliant on the contractor taking some fairly short notice escorts to other prisons when 'C' Hall numbers were being reduced. This whole

process was well handled and contributed significantly to the ending of stopping out earlier than might have otherwise been achieved.

Prisoner Complaints Procedure

3.8 The Business Improvement Manager co-ordinates the complaints system. He is also responsible for chairing and organising the Internal Complaints Committees (ICC) which take place every week. There were six ICCs held during the inspection.

3.9 Complaint forms are readily available in the halls. A sample of completed forms were checked and the answers were, in the main, appropriate. However, Perth does not hold a central file of copies of completed complaint forms. Nor are complaints entered onto the SPS Prisoner Record System (PR2). Individual complaint forms are placed in the prisoner's file when the process has been completed or the complaint has been withdrawn by the prisoner. This makes it extremely difficult for the prison to monitor trends. 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.

Prisoner Disciplinary System

3.10 Prisoners who require to be seen in an Orderly Room as part of the disciplinary system will usually be seen in the accommodation areas although in some cases the Orderly Room within the Segregation Unit is used. The paperwork and procedures were observed and followed normal SPS procedures. A range of managers carry out these duties, not just operational managers. It was not practical to observe all managers carrying out Orderly Room duties during the inspection, but to ensure consistency and fairness, a clear set of operating procedures should be communicated to all managers.

3.11 The Orderly Room in 'B' Hall is held in a multi-purpose room within the hall. It was observed that staff stood between the prisoner and the adjudicator. Generally, this is not considered to be appropriate as it can intimidate. When asked about disciplinary procedures in the prison, all prisoner groups were critical of the perceived fairness of the Orderly Room procedure. Records of proceedings for the preceding three months were examined and it was noted that of a total of 364 awards which had been made within Orderly Rooms, in only four

cases was a “not guilty” verdict recorded. While it is difficult to reach conclusions, this does seem a surprisingly low number. There does not appear to be a process in place to monitor the outcome and consistency of Orderly Rooms at Perth. A system of monitoring the consistency of Orderly Room procedures should be put in place.

Segregation Unit

3.12 The Segregation Unit is a purpose built facility. It has 14 normal cells and a ‘silent’ cell. There were ten prisoners living in the Segregation Unit on the first day of inspection. The 14 cells have integral sanitation, EPIC and proper beds. Prisoners also have televisions and kettles in their rooms. One of these cells is specially designed to supervise a prisoner if he has swallowed drugs. This cell has never been used.

3.13 Facilities are good. There is a multi-gym available to prisoners on a rota basis. Some prisoners were using this on a regular basis. There are sufficient showers and three exercise yards. A regime information pack is available, which at time of inspection, was being reviewed. Visits must be booked in advance. Segregation Unit prisoners had, until very recently, attended ‘Day Care’, which was based in the Health Centre. This was a structured programme run by the Mental Health Nurse, Officers and an Occupational Therapist. It was very popular with both prisoners and staff. Consideration should be given to re-introducing the structured day care regime for prisoners in the Segregation Unit.

Night Duty

3.14 One First Line Manager and seven officers (two of whom are in Friarton) cover night duty. One group of staff comprising two managers and twenty three officers covers all night shifts throughout the year. Another manager acts as back up for approximately eight weeks of the year to cover annual leave and training needs. The level of continuity in managing night duty makes for a high level of consistency and confidence amongst the staff.

3.15 Night duty instructions are in place in each area. They are well written and provide a useful back up for staff. All staff are trained in the use of first aid equipment. Handover arrangements from different shifts are excellent.

3.16 The prison has recently introduced a 'Samaritans Telephone'. Staff can hand this to a prisoner in 'A' Hall who is in distress and would like to contact the Samaritans National Help Line. Since its introduction in September 2005 to the week of inspection this service had not been requested, perhaps reflecting the fact that prisoners in 'A' Hall share cells and may not like to ask for it in these circumstances.

3.17 Arrangements for prisoners who require to go to hospital during the night are good. The night shift managers have very good contact arrangements with the doctor who, if necessary, will contact the hospital in advance of the prisoner's arrival to assess the likelihood of him being detained. This is then communicated to Reliance who put the appropriate processes into action at that point. This means that staffing levels during the night can be maintained more consistently.

4. ADDICTIONS

Management and Policy

4.1 The addiction policy lacks direction. There is no strategic drugs meeting and consequently no overall management or co-ordination of the addiction services. Drug issues are discussed at the rehabilitation and care group. Staff feel that they are in ‘fire fighting’ mode. The drugs issue is not being dealt with effectively. **It is recommended that an Addiction Strategy Group, chaired by a senior manager, is set up.**

4.2 An addiction team meets once a week. This is attended by the doctor, the addiction nurse, the Phoenix House manager, an addictions officer and a social worker when available. This meeting discusses individual cases and seems to work well with shared decisions being made about prisoners with complex addiction problems.

4.3 The nature of the addiction service provided is changing. Officers previously designated as drug support staff are being redeployed to other duties and the last of three officers still in post was soon to be transferred. The services provided by these officers will be provided by Phoenix House staff and the additional addiction nurses.

Phoenix House

4.4 Phoenix House has now taken over the casework contract from Cranstoun Addiction Services, and was beginning to implement the new enhanced casework process. Staffing includes a manager and three caseworkers. There were two posts vacant which Phoenix were advertising for at the time of inspection. Phoenix offers harm reduction intervention, assessment and case work, smoking cessation, and alcohol awareness.

4.5 Referrals to Phoenix have dropped recently. This may be partly due to short-term prisoners, who previously would have remained at Perth, being transferred elsewhere while building work was ongoing. Additionally, very few referrals come from the Core Screen Assessment during induction. This process does not seem to be working well in Perth.

Nursing

4.6 The addictions nurse provides a service three to four days a week, with the remaining days allocated to the Open Estate. The nurse has a caseload of 60, including Friarton, and a waiting list of around 30. The nurse administers methadone and detoxification medication but is not able to support prisoners after detoxification or support those on methadone. The addiction nurse also does urine testing, although only infrequently due to the workload. The urine testing process is such that it may well be possible for prisoners to present samples of urine that are not their own. This should be addressed.

Mandatory Drug Testing

4.7 MDT staffing was reduced from three to two in February following the SPS decision to stop Random Mandatory Drug Testing. This was then reintroduced by SPS during the year, and in September 46 people were selected for testing in Perth: 20 refused and seven tested positive.

4.8 There has been no frequency testing in the last year. This is surprising as this type of testing can be used to help prisoners who want to address their problem.

Links with the Community

4.9 The prison has very good links with the community, particularly the Tayside Drug Service and the Tayside Resettlement Team. Senior staff are involved in two local Drug Action Teams.

5. PRISONER MANAGEMENT

Reception

5.1 The Reception is a relatively small area given the level of transactions which take place. It consists of a reception counter with staff office, a small corridor with 16 cubicles (eight on each side), and adjacent to that a WC. Outwith the cubicle corridor there is a telephone, which is available to prisoners throughout the time spent in reception. This is an area of **good practice**. There is a small interview room, a store for the reception cleaner, communal waiting room and adjacent to it a WC and separate shower. There is also a small nurse's station and a second area comprising four cubicles and a small communal area usually used for prisoners requiring some form of separation from the main prisoner population. Cubicles are used for search and dressing/undressing purposes only, with prisoners then being held within the communal waiting room prior to their escort.

5.2 Although the Reception has a small interview room for one-to-one prisoner interviews, staff indicated, and it was observed, that most interviews took place at the door of the cubicles while prisoners were changing. This is not acceptable, particularly for the assessment of prisoners who may have some degree of vulnerability. The interview room should be used for all prisoner interviews.

5.3 Above the Reception is an area which comprises the First Line Manager's office, two large storage areas for prisoners' property and clothing, and provision for clothing to be washed should that be required. This area was well organised and well maintained.

5.4 The Reception can be extremely busy. On one day of inspection 42 prisoners (more than 10% of the population) were listed for court. The atmosphere is very relaxed, with staff maintaining good levels of control while managing a generally informal relationship with most prisoners. Prisoners' questions and issues were dealt with quickly and efficiently. It was indicated that the escort service provided by Reliance had resulted in prisoners being returned to the prison from the courts in a more even manner throughout the day. However there was an issue with larger numbers of prisoners arriving en masse at the end of the court day from the principal courts. The scheduling of escorts from the principal courts to the prison should be improved.

5.5 The main document used for prisoner escorts is the 'Prisoner Escort Record'. This is working well and provides a consistent hand-over from the prison to Reliance and vice versa. The documents viewed were filled in correctly and annotated appropriately.

5.6 A notice indicates that all hospital escorts from the prison, without exception, will be "double-cuffed". All prisoners, regardless of level supervision are having the highest level of security applied. The practice of "double-cuffing" all prisoners on escort should be reviewed.

5.7 Of concern was the fact that prisoners can wait in reception for up to six hours before a space becomes available in the prison. Prisoners who have been in the prison and are returned to it, normally return to the cell they were in. New admissions wait until a cell is available. It is not unusual for a new admission to come in during the course of the afternoon and not be allocated to a cell until the evening. Indeed, during the course of the inspection it was observed that an attempt was made to identify a long-term prisoner for re-location to Friarton Hall in order to free up a room which could, temporarily, hold two newly admitted prisoners. Such crisis management was identified as being routine and management and staff efforts in managing this deserve to be noted. However, the system for identifying vacant cells should be improved.

5.8 Despite the length of time prisoners may spend in reception, the provision of food is extremely poor. It was observed throughout the week of inspection that prisoners held in reception over the evening mealtime were offered, as their main meal, three sandwiches with a meat filling. The only option for a drink was water from a tap within the toilet area. There is no provision for hot food or hot drinks. Prisoners leaving the prison to go to court in the morning received a breakfast of two rolls with margarine and jam issued the night before. Milk is not issued to prisoners going to court because the halls are not staffed, consequently the breakfast cereal available can't be eaten. At court, provision is a micro waved meal. Consequently, a prisoner who was attending court for a week would receive no hot food at the prison. Provision should be made for hot drinks and hot food to be provided to prisoners who require to have their meal while in reception.

5.9 Prisoners going to court are escorted to reception by staff from the long-term hall. This is because they attend the prison earlier than staff from the short-term and remand halls.

A result of this is that prisoners have no option to shower before attending courts. Prisoners should have the opportunity to shower before attending court.

5.10 Overall, the Reception is a well-run and purposeful area.

Induction

5.11 Induction takes place in the Links Centre. At the time of the last inspection, the Links Centre was managed by a dedicated Links Centre Manager who had responsibility for Links Centre staff and the Addictions and MDT officers. Induction in the Links Centre is now the responsibility of the Programmes Manager. Full time staffing has been reduced from three to two staff with backfill from other areas for four hours each day. Additionally, the administrative support, which was based in the Centre is no longer available. There are now less staff resources available for work, both within the Links Centre and for induction.

5.12 Induction in the Links Centre is geared towards meeting the needs of convicted prisoners and is not set up to reflect the needs of untried or short-term prisoners. Induction for convicted prisoners runs each day Monday to Thursday with a target that all convicted admissions will be seen within 72 hours. However, it is usual for convicted prisoners to be seen within 24 hours. There is no induction for prisoners admitted on a Friday or during the weekend until the Monday. This should be addressed. Induction consists of three presentations: the national harm reduction input from Phoenix House; a presentation from the Learning Centre on what is available; and a two-hour delivery of the national induction package by the induction officers. After induction, there is an introduction to PT.

5.13 The day after induction, induction staff administer the SPS Core Screen Assessment Instrument to all convicted prisoners. Additionally, induction staff are responsible for administering the initial interview and psychometric testing as part of the long-term prisoner Sentence Management process. Following the Core Screen Assessment, a Community Integration Plan is drawn up for all prisoners serving 30 days or more. The induction staff are responsible for inputting this to the Prisoner Record System. Previously this was done by an administrator. The Core Screen material remains in the Links Centre. The induction at Perth is basic to say the least, particularly when compared to induction programmes being developed elsewhere. The responsibility for all aspects of induction fall to the two induction

staff with minimum input from other agencies. A range of service providers should be involved in delivering induction.

5.14 The current focus on convicted prisoners does not take into account the fact that most short-term convicted prisoners will be transferred from Perth to prisons in the Central Belt within a very short space of time. It has been observed in other inspections (for example Low Moss 15-16 August 2005) that these prisoners will go through the SPS Core Screen Assessment again at the receiving prison: this is unnecessary duplication. During the period of building and renovation at Perth, if the plan is to continue to keep the short term population to a minimum, 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.

5.15 There is no structured induction for remand prisoners and the SPS Core Screen Assessment is not used with this group. Within 'A' Hall, which has traditionally been the remand hall, two officers carry out a fairly basic induction programme as part of their duties. This includes delivery of the national harm reduction session by Phoenix House staff. The induction covers basic information and ensures that both visits and telephone record sheets are issued to individuals. While the First Line Manager provides a list of admissions for induction staff in the hall, there are no records kept. The staff within 'A' Hall also cover the untried prisoners within 'B' Hall, although on a much more ad hoc basis. At the time of inspection, Phoenix House did not deliver the harm reduction session to 'B' Hall prisoners. There is clearly an issue at Perth that the remand population has expanded to a point where 'B' Hall has in effect become another remand hall, which also holds a small number of convicted prisoners. However, the regime within that hall is geared almost exclusively to convicted prisoners. All remand prisoners including remand prisoners on protection should receive a structured induction programme.

Sentence Management

5.16 Sentence Management is the responsibility of the First Line Manager for Programmes and Interventions. He in turn is part of the wider Risk Management Group, chaired by the Deputy Governor, which meets monthly to review the management of prisoners causing concern. Additionally the Risk Management Group will consider prisoners who have been subject to a licence recall and those who have been downgraded, mainly from the Open

Estate. At the time of the last inspection, the Sentence Management paperwork, assessments and planning were carried out by officers within the Programmes Group with some support from trained risk and needs officers elsewhere. Sentence Management is now carried out by residential staff who do this as part of their other duties: with the exception of the initial interview and the psychometric testing which is done by the two Links Centre/Induction Officers.

5.17 Perth had previously shown good compliance with Sentence Management targets and it is encouraging to note that this was largely being maintained, although there had been some slippage. Six weeks prior to compliance with target dates, individual cases are allocated to the residential areas for risk and needs assessments or any action planning which may be required. Previously, prisoners at Friarton underwent the full Sentence Management process, but over the past two to three months the volume of prisoners passing through Friarton has been such that little Sentence Management work has been done. Consequently, prisoners are moving to the Open Estate with little or no Sentence Management work to help them adjust to a less structured environment. The speculation over the future use of Friarton is such that this may not be an issue for Friarton in the future.

Throughcare

5.18 Amongst the external agencies which attend the Links Centre are Jobcentreplus; Shelter; Career Scotland; representatives of various criminal justice local teams; and a number of agencies on a one-off basis. However the Links Centre has not progressed much in the past year: the agencies participating being mainly those who participated at the time of the last inspection. There has also been a reduction in administrative support within the Unit. With the SPS focus on working with external partnerships it is disappointing to see a Links Centre going backwards. Activities in the Links Centre should be developed.

Pre-Release

5.19 Induction staff are responsible for dealing with prisoners due to be liberated. Unlike the approach which is now becoming more common in other prisons, there is no structured pre-release programme. Prisoners due to be liberated are seen one week prior to liberation to ensure that any issues in the Community Integration Plan have been dealt with. A previous

system which involved 16 key workers who had responsibility for monitoring the Community Integration Plans and ensuring that interventions and follow-ups were carried out, has been discontinued. At present there are fewer short term prisoners in Perth and consequently a lower number of liberations than has been the case. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to developing a more structured approach to pre-release.

Life Sentence Prisoners

5.20 There were 42 life sentence prisoners being held at time of inspection. They are managed by a Lifer Liaison Officer (LLO) who is a First Line Manager. A further three FLMS were undergoing training for this role. The LLO handles all of the casework as well as having personal contact with families. He meets all lifers on admission and explains processes and procedures to them. Work carried out with life sentence prisoners has been commended by Parole Board.

6. HEALTHCARE

Physical Environment

6.1 The health centre is located in an old building, although the new build will address this. The décor in the current centre is relatively fresh and the environment is clean and tidy. The current layout is cramped with the majority of care being provided on the ground floor. Many of the rooms on the first floor were under utilised or not used at all. Better use should be made of the current space available in the health centre.

6.2 The four bedded ward in the health centre has been closed as part of SPS policy. Staff generally felt that patients were now accessing more appropriate NHS facilities when in-patient care was required.

Access to Healthcare

6.3 The practice of bringing prisoners to the health centre for the majority of treatment rather than delivering it in the halls is welcomed. Having three dedicated officers as ‘runners’ is also a very positive initiative and ensures that the best use is made of healthcare staff time.

6.4 At the same time, it is recognised that the dispensing of methadone and general medication is logistically easier and safer in the halls. However, due to ongoing work in the halls methadone was being dispensed in the health centre (apart from in ‘E’ Hall) as a temporary measure. This is currently manageable due to the reduced number of prisoners. Although there is no need to have a treatment room in the halls, it is necessary to have secure facilities for the storage of medications, including methadone. This secure environment should also be used to house emergency equipment. It was noted that in an emergency staff must carry emergency equipment from the health centre to the halls. This should be addressed.

6.5 The practice of bringing prisoners to the health centre is very much in line with the ethos of health care delivery in the community. It has also led to a significant drop in the number of prisoners reporting unfit for work. That said, prisoners were unhappy with the healthcare provided. The SPS Prisoner Survey showed that 81% of prisoners felt that their

healthcare needs were better met in the community. During the inspection a prisoner group said that health care staff were dismissive and did not communicate with them effectively, often “keeping us in the dark”. Prisoners complained that they had to go to the health centre rather than staff coming to them. Health care staff and officers should work together to raise awareness of the benefits of this approach.

Nursing Services

6.6 The nursing team has a complement of one health centre manager, 25 nursing staff and 1.5 health care assistants. Only 19 nursing staff were in place at the time of inspection. The vacancies consist of two clinical nurse managers and a new resource of four addiction nurses. Within the current complement there are three mental health nurses and one addictions nurse, the rest being dedicated primary care nurses. The current skills mix within the health centre should be reviewed.

6.7 The team is keen to progress the development of specialist clinics. Primary care nurse led clinics have been established in sexual health, Blood Borne Viruses (BBV) and smoking cessation, with the opportunity to progress some of the doctor led clinics to nurse led. These clinics work well and nurses are given the opportunity to gain skills and training in these specialist areas. Well established links with Ninewells Hospital ensures referral for treatment. A nurse has been appointed as the ‘lifelong learning’ representative: a Royal College of Nursing initiative to ensure the personal development of all nursing staff.

6.8 When operating at full complement, the team is well resourced and they have the opportunity, with a reduced prison population, to embed a community health centre culture.

Medical Services

6.9 General medical care is arranged through the central SPS Medacs contract. There are two doctors providing cover, who have worked at the prison for 15 years and for four years. The doctors apply the same principles of general practice to the prison health centre which is apparent in, for example, the appointment system and the encouragement of prisoners to take responsibility for their repeat prescriptions.

6.10 On call cover is provided seven nights per week by one of the doctors. The doctors expressed concern that the nurse triage system had been withdrawn, and although calls are at a minimum, officers contact the doctor direct. When the doctor is on leave, cover is usually

provided by a doctor located in the Central Belt. Should this cover be required, the travelling time to the prison would seem to be excessive.

6.11 There are four doctor led clinics: asthma, chronic obstructive airways disease, diabetes and cardiovascular. Steps are underway to progress some of these clinics to nurse led. Once this is established the doctors will move to a supervisory role.

Mental Health Services

6.12 Psychiatry input is provided by the Murray Royal Hospital in Perth with two consultant psychiatrists providing five sessions per week. The psychiatrists involve their junior doctors and specialist registrars (SpRs), as the prison is considered to be a good training environment. The prison benefits from research projects carried out by the SpRs in conjunction with the mental health team. A multidisciplinary team is in place with representation from all the appropriate staff and agencies. The Royal College of Psychiatry, when reviewing the prison for training purposes of SpRs, commented on the comprehensive input to the multidisciplinary mental health team.

6.13 Mental health staff do not work at weekends, therefore occasions arise where general nurses need to assess prisoners' mental health in the first instance. This is not ideal and should be addressed. That said, access to mental health expertise during the week is very good.

6.14 Referral to the mental health team is straightforward. As well as routine referral procedures, prisoners can self refer, and Listeners and other prisoners who are concerned about a fellow prisoner can also refer.

6.15 The mental health team have recently set up co-ordinated group work. For example, they target vulnerable individuals on remand who lack confidence or self esteem. Although in its early stages, this type of work has been well received. Patient information leaflets about accessing mental health services are available and the team are keen to advertise this on the internal TV loop for those prisoners who cannot read or write.

6.16 Members of the mental health team expressed concern about the lack of communication and information sharing relating to prisoners with mental health problems

when they are transferred to the Open Estate from other prisons around Scotland. This is an SPS issue. **It is recommended that better systems of communication relating to prisoners with mental health problems are put in place across the SPS.**

6.17 In general, provision for prisoners in Perth with mental health problems is good.

Dental Services

6.18 The dental equipment in the health centre was described as being equivalent to that in the dentist's own practice. The dentist is currently employed two days per week (four sessions). All prisoners are seen within three weeks of referral with an average waiting time of two weeks.

6.19 Having dedicated Officers as 'runners' maximises the use of the dentist's time and the four sessions meet demand. The dentist deals mainly with gross negligence and attempting to get prisoners 'dentally fit'. In many cases this is not achieved due to the high turnover of prisoners.

Pharmacy

6.20 Pharmacy is organised through the contract with Alliance (formerly Moss Pharmacy). The pharmacist visits the prison once a week to provide advice on the storage, administration and handling of drugs; and to maintain the emergency equipment and review the pharmacy financial reports.

6.21 Medications are dispensed on a weekly basis. Although this is appropriate for remand and short-term prisoners it might be less time consuming to move long-term prisoners to fortnightly or monthly prescriptions.

6.22 Concern was expressed about supervised administration of medications. Nurses pre dispense medication into a plastic sleeve which holds the medication kardex for the individual prisoner. It is then transported to the hall and administered to the prisoners. This is an unacceptable practice and should be improved. Having suitable storage for medications in the halls would resolve this issue.

6.23 Although it is good that prisoners are encouraged to initiate routine repeat prescriptions, this can lead to prisoners stockpiling medications they are not using. There are potential safety issues here and steps should be taken to stop it happening.

6.24 Prisoners' medication prescriptions should be reviewed by the doctor every three months. This was established at the set up of the first contract with Moss Pharmacy in 1998-99. However, audits carried out by the pharmacist show that on average there is 60% non compliance with this. Prisoners taking methadone often have two separate prescription kardex's which increases the risk of an error being made. These issues should be addressed.

Optician

6.25 The optician provides one session per month with the facility to provide extra sessions if required. The waiting time is approximately six weeks.

Podiatry

6.26 The podiatrist provides one session per month with the facility to provide extra sessions if required. The waiting time is approximately five weeks

Physiotherapy

6.27 There is no physiotherapy provision within the prison. Should a prisoner require this, he is escorted to Perth Royal Infirmary for an out patient appointment. The prison has been unable to recruit a physiotherapist.

Counselling

6.28 There is no general counselling service provided by health care. Input from the Prisoner Listener Scheme is available, and the opportunity to telephone the Samaritans when requested are in place. The open referral system to mental health nurses ensures that anyone requiring counselling receives it.

7. LEARNING, SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Background

7.1 The recent new contract for the provision of learning, skills and employability services had been awarded to Lauder College and implemented in April 2005. Lauder College held the previous contract.

Learning Centre

7.2 A full-time manager was responsible for the learning centres at Perth and Friarton. A team of six experienced and well-qualified teaching staff supported learning across both centres. The Perth and Kinross Literacy Partnership supported a dedicated adult literacy tutor post and this enhanced one-to-one learning. The teaching staff were enthusiastic and committed to the needs of their learners. The prisoners spoke warmly of the positive relationship with learning centre staff and there was a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere in classrooms.

7.3 Accommodation at both learning centres was of a good standard and they were well furnished, bright and clean. The Perth learning centre had six classrooms located on two levels, including a well-equipped computer room and art room. However, the computing room was located on the upper-floor and was not easily accessible to prisoners with mobility difficulties. A few older specification PCs were available in a downstairs classroom but there was no access to printing facilities in this room. These computers were also unsuitable to support the range of software required for the teaching of mathematics in this room. The Friarton learning centre had one large teaching room equipped with suitable computers and a small private study room.

7.4 Learning centre staff promoted opportunities for learning through posters and information leaflets distributed in the halls. Word-of-mouth personal recommendations from other prisoners was encouraged by staff as a way of attracting new learners. Learning centre staff held a useful welcome session for new learners twice a week where prisoners were given information about the range of courses and services available in the learning centre.

7.5 All new prisoners were required to complete an “alerting tool questionnaire” during their induction process. This short questionnaire was used to diagnose their basic literacy and numeracy needs. Learning centre staff responded to these results from and engaged with prisoners to offer further basic skills assessment or support, if they wished so. However, there was no proactive follow-up of prisoners refusing initial educational assistance once they had established themselves in the prison.

7.6 The current high number of prisoner movements presented real difficulties for learning centre staff to plan and implement meaningful programmes of learning for many prisoners. Often prisoners were transferred to another establishment before programmes could be completed or, in some cases, begun. The transfer of prisoners’ initial educational assessment and learning records to the forwarding establishment by learning centre staff was not timeous, due to the large numbers involved and lack of administrative support. This resulted in prisoners having to engage in similar initial assessment at their new establishments.

7.7 All learning was self-directed and appropriately supported by tutors where required. Prisoners engaged purposefully in an appropriate range of basic and core skills learning activities, including literacy, numeracy and ICT. A more limited range of other subjects, including art and flexible learning units was also offered. Overall prisoners were satisfied with the relevance of their learning and the support from tutors. However, art classes were only available one day a week and more than a few prisoners expressed a desire for additional classes. Similarly, the unavailability of full-time education was a concern of more than a few prisoners. Evening classes were only available one night a week due to unavailability of prison staff and this reduced opportunities for more prisoners to take up learning activities.

7.8 Prisoners attending classes and completing programmes attained certification for their learning. In the current year prisoners achieved an average of 34 accredited SQA Units per month. This compared to a monthly average of 52 SQA Units in 2004. This drop in prisoner attainment was due to the decrease in prisoner population at Perth and the high number of prisoner movements. The learning centre also celebrated prisoner success with regular award ceremonies that were attended by senior staff from Lauder College.

7.9 Learning centre staff engaged in an annual self-evaluation exercise that identified strengths and weaknesses in the planning and delivery of learning programmes. However, no SMART actions were recorded and no subsequent quality improvement plan produced. This reduced the effectiveness of the process and limited opportunities to bring about real improvement to the learning experience of prisoners.

Employability

7.10 At both Perth and Friarton the majority of prisoners were allocated to a good range of work parties. Opportunities for work experience and training existed in areas such as painting, joinery, brickwork, tailoring, hairdressing and laundering.

7.11 The industrial training units were well equipped to industry standard and maintenance and health and safety records were up-to-date. Industrial safety was actively promoted and all prisoners underwent lifting and handling training before they were allowed to participate in vocational activities. In the joinery workshop prisoners were only able to access machinery independently once they had demonstrated their competence to use it safely. Again, good record keeping supported this process.

7.12 Prisoners were engaged in meaningful production work in the joinery, wood handling and tailoring workshops. Significant external contracts were delivered to a number of major national companies and agencies. Production targets mirrored industry expectations and served to familiarise prisoners with a realistic work environment, with bonuses paid only if targets were achieved.

7.13 However, there was almost daily disruption to work parties at both Perth and Friarton due to a shortage of prison escort staff to take prisoners to work areas. This had a negative impact on the groups of prisoners who were unable to access their work parties and resulted in prisoners being restricted to their halls during the day. It also impacted on production targets not being achieved and prevented a few prisoners from achieving bonus payments. **It is recommended that prisoners are able to access their work parties.**

7.14 Prisoners on more than a few of the work parties were enrolled for appropriate vocational awards such as City & Guild and SQA Scottish Progression Awards. However,

there was no formal recording and certification of employability skills that were clearly being delivered and developed. Opportunities existed for a SPS certificate to record these skills in attendance, teamwork, problem solving and vocational expertise but were not offered to prisoners.

7.15 Prison staff supported prisoners in the development of basic numeracy skills through their delivery of vocational skills training. However, there was no active support of this basic skills delivery by learning centre staff or indeed regular discussion between vocational trainers and learning centre staff. This reduced the support available to prisoners for basic skills development. Plans were in place for closer working when the new learning centre and vocational training centre buildings are completed.

Library

7.16 Routinely prisoners had good opportunities to use library facilities at Perth, through a well-planned programme of access. However, at the time of inspection access was suspended for prisoner work parties and protection parties. Prisoners on remand or in the Segregation Unit had more limited access to facilities, with a selection of books available on a library trolley. Around 7% of the prisoner population made regular use of library facilities.

7.17 Excellent relations were maintained with the local authority library (AK Bell Library) and this resulted in a good supply of material, including talking and large format books. The local authority librarian attended the prison weekly and actively sought out books on specific topics for prisoners. However, there were no current periodicals, magazines or music loans available, apart from an in-house SPS journal for prisoners.

7.18 An innovative “Meet the Author” session was held three or four times a year and was attended regularly by around 15 prisoners. Local authors engaged meaningfully with the prisoner group and shared their work and thoughts on literary matters. This is an area of **good practice**.

7.19 Prisoners were not involved in the acquisition of stock and there was no strategic partnership between the learning centre and library for provision of resources to support

learners. This poor liaison meant that opportunities were missed to link the library more closely to prisoner learning activities.

7.20 The current accommodation, in a former woodworking shop, was of poor quality and did not present an environment conducive for prisoners to make best use of the library facilities.

Conclusion

7.21 Prisoners enjoyed positive learning experiences supported by enthusiastic and committed learning centre staff. However, the current prison regime of high prisoner movements numbers presented real difficulties for learning centre staff to plan and implement meaningful programmes of learning for many prisoners. Work experience and vocational training opportunities for prisoners were generally good but the shortage of prison escort staff prevented prisoners from gaining maximum benefit from these activities. The formal recording and certification of employability skills should be pursued by SPS staff.

8. CARE

Family Contact

8.1 The visit room is bright, spacious and well maintained: visits take place in a relaxed atmosphere. There were adequate staff supervising the visits, although there were no regular visit staff apart from the First Line Manager. The room is accessible to disabled prisoners and visitors. Facilities for children are good. There is a play area and each evening volunteers from the organisations TOYBOX or MUPPETS attend.

8.2 Canteen facilities had been provided by a volunteer until 18 months ago. Now there are vending machines which provide a range of snacks.

8.3 Visits for remand prisoners are booked by the visitors who telephone the establishment between 13.30 – 16.00 hrs on week days. Some visitors might not have access to a telephone during this time and the arrangements should be improved.

8.4 There are six Family Contact Development Officers (FCDO) who each spend about 20% of their time in this role. One FCDO is available during visits to speak to prisoners' families. If required, an FCDO will meet any disabled visitors or first time visitors before scheduled visits to explain procedures and show them the visit area. This is an area of **good practice**.

Suicide Prevention

8.5 There were two deaths in custody in the year prior to inspection (subject to Fatal Accident Inquiries). Since April 2005 there have been eight incidences of self harm. The review of the deaths has highlighted learning points which are shared within the prison and inform the ACT National Co-ordinators meeting.

8.6 An ACT committee is in place and meets bi-monthly. The prison set a target of 80% compliance for refresher trained on ACT and is currently 85% compliant.

8.7 The prison has a good relationship with the Samaritans and has a Service Level Agreement in place. There is also a framework agreement in place with the Listeners which includes a 'statement of intent' explaining what is expected of the Listeners and what is expected of prison staff. The demand for Listeners is increasing and this may well be due to the proactive approach being taken.

Physical Education

8.8 The provision of physical education has stalled. There are fewer sessions for prisoners than before and much certificated work has now stopped. Facilities are dated although a new gym is planned in the next phase of the establishment's Development Plan.

8.9 A change to staff attendance patterns has resulted in evening classes for prisoners being lost. Convicted prisoners now have fewer sessions during the day: this is undoubtedly a consequence of the increase in remand prisoners.

8.10 Facilities consist of a small gym and a large cardiovascular and weights room. There is a 5-a-side football pitch in a yard next to 'E' Hall. A large grass football pitch that used to be very popular with prisoners was lost as it was on the site of the new activities centre. Showers and changing facilities, although old, are clean and functional.

8.11 A small classroom is used when the PEI's are delivering training: 'Heart Start' to staff and 'Manual Handling' to staff and prisoners. When it is not being used as a classroom the room is used as a store.

8.12 Previously prisoners could work toward the Community Sports Leader Award qualification, football coaching badges and SVQ modules. None of these were now available.

8.13 The gym facilities in Friarton are disappointing. The weights room is a long narrow room with limited space for exercise. The cardiovascular room is larger but there is very little by way of equipment.

Social Work

8.14 The social work staffing complement is six full-time social workers: four in the main prison and two at Friarton. Until recently the team had been operating with half that number. This has impacted on the level of social work service provided to prisoners. Vacancies are being filled gradually. Accommodation is good: it is in an Annexe of 'A' Hall and close to prisoner programmes and the Chaplaincy.

8.15 The social work team has had to concentrate on statutory work as a result of the staffing situation. This work has focused on the National Standards and Objectives for Criminal Justice but timescales have not been met. The team have not implemented phase I of the Throughcare Standards but have written to local authority social work departments asking them to pick up prisoners on throughcare and to attend pre-release meetings. All prisoners are risk assessed but are not offered one-to-one work. The team works with all sex offenders. Referrals are received in writing and all are responded to. The Unit had 1,000 such referrals last year.

8.16 A major area of concern is the movement of prisoners from the prison, particularly during the preparation of statutory reports. This makes it difficult to ensure continuity of care. Sometimes the social work department was not copied into the movement of prisoners in relation to parole, although this has now been addressed.

8.17 There is an issue that prisoners are moving through Friarton too quickly. The fact that some prisoners are moving before a background report has been completed increases the pressure on social work staff.

8.18 A social work manager attends the Head of Department meeting every three months. There is also social work representation at the health/addiction meetings, mental health team meetings and risk management group. The social work manager also has regular meetings with the regime services manager to appraise developments and issues. The social work manager should be part of the new ACT strategy and attend ACT meetings.

8.19 All social workers should have a 'SPIN' terminal. At present some are using Perth & Kinross social work computers which are not networked.

8.20 Contact with community colleagues tends to be in relation to preparation for release; parole prisoners subject to recall; extended sentencing; and supervised release orders. Social workers regularly liaise with community colleagues in the preparation of home background reports. In relation to high risk offenders and sex offenders, social workers regularly liaise with the police and child protection agencies as well as attending community multi-agency risk assessment meetings.

Psychology

8.21 The team is made up of one full-time senior psychologist, two full-time psychologists and one part-time psychologist who is the team leader on the Violence Prevention Programme. This team also provides the psychological services at the Open Estate and a certain amount of work for the SPS nationally.

8.22 The areas of engagement of the team include mental health, risk management, Sentence Management, prisoner programmes, identification and management of short-term sex offenders, research and participation in incident command.

8.23 The psychology team is well integrated into the management of the prison: recent SPS changes to the management of psychology have been appreciated by the team at Perth.

8.24 They have recognised particular concerns about the management of short-term sex offenders in Perth; and have been energetic in efforts to make it possible for such prisoners to be moved to prisons where they can participate in STOP programmes.

8.25 They have also been active in the matter of the movement of prisoners to the Open Estate. It has been their particular interest to make sure that prisoners are moved on because it is right for them and their situation, and to make sure that meeting the needs of the Open Estate for numbers is never a sufficient criterion. and not simply to meet the need of filling the Open Estate.

Programmes

8.26 Arrangements for managing and delivering programmes are sound. The responsible manager also has responsibility for addictions, the Links Centre and education. At the time

of inspection he still co-ordinated Sentence Management which was in the process of being transferred to hall based staff. Oversight of programmes comes from the Risk Management Group which is chaired by the Deputy Governor and meets monthly. This meeting reviews prisoners who are causing concern, prisoners recalled from licence and downgrades from the Open Estate. It tries to link services available. Prisoners being considered can attend if they wish.

8.27 Since the last inspection, the number of Accredited Preferred programmes has reduced by one: Cognitive Skills and Anger Management are still offered. The Approved Activities offered include: 'Alcohol Awareness', 'First Steps', 'Relationships', 'Parenting' and 'Lifeline'. While targets were met last year, the temporary change in the population means that there are fewer prisoners available to take part.

Race Relations

8.28 A Race Relations Policy is in place. This is led by a Residential Unit Manager who chairs Race Relations meetings. A Residential First Line Manager acts as Deputy. Meetings take place every quarter and these are well attended by a cross section of staff.

8.29 At time of inspection there were 14 ethnic minority prisoners in Perth. The SPIN co-ordinator produces a list of all ethnic minority prisoners each morning for all members of the Race Relations Committee. This is an area of **good practice**. There have been no Race Relations complaints in the past 18 months and complaint forms are readily available in the halls. Translation services are provided by either the Translation and Interpretation Service in Dundee or the National Phone Translation Service.

8.30 Religious events are catered for, although there is not a good uptake.

Chaplaincy

8.31 The chaplaincy team consists of three chaplains: one full-time and two part-time. They provide a total of 67 hours each week. There is one vacancy which should increase provision to 77 hours each week. There is, however, uncertainty as to what is happening with this vacancy. At times there are no members of the chaplaincy team on duty. This is usually

the case when a chaplain is on holiday. During the week of inspection there were three days with no chaplain in the establishment.

8.32 The team deliver a variety of services and are involved in the ACT Committee, the Multi Disciplinary Mental Health Team, and the Race Relations Committee. They aim to see every new admission on the day of admission or at the latest the day after. However, this has been problematic since July due to the vacancy.

8.33 There is no Prison Fellowship. This was stopped in December 2004 as the prison was not able to supervise the sessions.

Visiting Committee

8.34 The Visiting Committee has been very much encouraged by the ending of slopping-out. They regard this as “a milestone” in the life of the prison.

8.35 However, they continue to have concerns about the quality of the living conditions in ‘E’ Hall. They believe that the accommodation, the furniture and the fittings there are of a poor standard; and that in particular the dormitories represent living conditions which are unsatisfactory.

8.36 The quality of prisoner’s food was also a long-standing concern of the Committee. Representatives of the Committee tasted the food regularly. They expressed confidence that a change in the method of serving food from sealed trays to a hotplate would improve the quality of the food.

8.37 It was the opinion of the representatives of the Committee who met with the Inspectorate that there was an increased level of safety in the prison: “Perth feels like a much safer prison”.

8.38 Real regret was expressed about what was perceived as a reduction in the operation of the Links Centre. Members of the Committee recognised that the changing mix of prisoners in Perth might change the emphasis of a Links Centre; but they were in no doubt that the

Centre was suffering from a reduction in resources at the very time when throughcare was being emphasised as a priority in the SPS and in the Scottish Executive.

8.39 An examination of minutes and records confirmed that The Visiting Committee met its statutory requirements. The Committee was in no doubt that it was well supported by the prison.

9. SERVICES

Estates and Facilities

9.1 Estates management is dominated by the ongoing building and renovation work. Conditions for prisoners should be significantly improved as the Development Plan approaches completion.

9.2 The estates team hold regular meetings with contractors and have also been involved in facilitating familiarisation visits to new facilities and carrying out safety assessments. This work has impacted on other routine maintenance commitments. The closure of 'C' Hall for example meant that hundreds of beds and other furniture had to be moved to other parts of the prison. This took staff time that would otherwise have been spent on maintenance.

9.3 Communication of what is happening in the prison has been well managed. The Estates Manager is part of the duty rota, and he is therefore in touch with all parts of the prison. There are also regular staff bulletins, and monthly stakeholder meetings. There is a very good 'Daily Systems Status Sheet' which keeps managers up to date with areas in need of attention.

9.4 The prison should take the opportunity provided by the building work to offer practical work, perhaps contributing to a qualification, to prisoners. For example, given the pressure which estates staff are under it was surprising that prisoners were not employed as hall painters: this works well in other prisons.

Health and Safety

9.5 There is a full time Health and Safety Co-ordinator in place. The Governor chairs the Health and Safety Steering Group. The Group meets quarterly and attendance is good.

9.6 There has been an improvement in meeting accident investigation report timescales. There were 58 accidents in past year, eight of these being reportable. There are five weekly checks in place. This was commended in a fire inspection which took place in January 2005. Eighty four per cent of staff are competent in Health and Safety.

9.7 An Infection Control Committee is also in place. This is chaired by the Deputy Governor. The Health and Safety co-ordinator is a member of this committee. New Infection Control training for all staff is being introduced.

Human Resources

9.8 The Human Resource function is well organised. There is little staff turnover and no major issues with recruitment. Grievances are rare: only two were raised last year.

9.9 There is a Staff Recognition Committee in place. Thirty six staff received Governor Commendation Awards and one received the Chief Executive Award in the last year.

Staff Training

9.10 A full time Staff Training Manager is in post. Staff training in Perth is well organised and all KPI elements of training and development were met.

9.11 Training statistics and competency compliance figures are as follows:

Equality and Diversity	100%
C & R Phase 1	99.8%
ACT	94%
H & S	84%
Emergency First Aid	85%
Fire Awareness	88%
Self Referral	95%
Short Duration Breathing Apparatus	85%

9.12 Twenty two staff are involved in further education and 14 First Line Managers are undertaking Management training. The Governor, Deputy Governor and HR Manager are the only people who can cancel training. The approach to staff training is good.

Catering

9.13 The food in the main prison is not good at the point of serving. In the most recent Prisoner Survey, prisoners consistently expressed dissatisfaction: choice was rated 18% lower

than the SPS average, the size of portions was 19% lower, the condition of the food when served was 12% lower, and the way in which it was served was 20% lower. There was not a single rating in Perth where more than 50% of prisoners rated the service as okay, good or very good.

9.14 The catering arrangements remain poor. After preparation, meals are put in plastic trays in heated trolleys – where they can stay for some time. The trolleys are then transferred varying distances from the kitchen to the halls. The food deteriorates in these circumstances. Prisoners said this, and it was confirmed by inspectors.

9.15 There are however two kitchens in Perth: one in the main prison and one in Friarton. The main kitchen operates the system above. The kitchen in Friarton prepares food in exactly the same way, to the same menu, using the same staff on a rotating basis, using the same amounts of the same ingredients. Yet the food is much more popular in Friarton. In Friarton, prisoners are served their meals directly from a servery. There is also a dining room. The difference between the main prison and Friarton is striking.

9.16 There is a pre-selection three week menu cycle in place for convicted prisoners. Special diets are catered for in the choices. Medical diets are occasionally referred through the health centre. However, prisoners in ‘A’ Hall are not given the opportunity to choose their meals in advance. A selection of each choice is sent to ‘A’ Hall each day and choice is on a first come first served basis. A system to make sure different prisoners were not given last choice on consecutive days was not in place either. All prisoners should be given the opportunity to choose their meals in advance.

9.17 Training is available to prisoners working in the kitchen. Modules in ‘Kitchen Porterage’ level 1 and ‘Cooking and Food Processing’ level 2 have been achieved by a number of prisoners over the last year.

9.18 There was no Catering Committee in place where prisoners could be consulted, and Senior Managers only rarely tasted meals in the kitchen and never in the halls. No complaints book was available. These should all be addressed.

9.19 It is recommended that the catering arrangements in the main prison are improved.

Laundry

9.20 The laundry is located in an old workshop due for demolition. It employs 28 prisoners, with up to 20 required at any one time. Prisoners can achieve a Guild of Launderers qualifications and some prisoners trained in the prison now work in laundries in the community.

9.21 Personal items are placed in a net bag, colour coded by hall. However, it was apparent that many prisoners in 'A' Hall did not have a bag. Other prisoners sharing cells also had to ask for extra net bags and they were not always available. Loss and damage are very rare, and there is a rotating timetable which allows sufficient access to each area. Although there are sufficient, fit for purpose washers and dryers in the laundry, many prisoners prefer to wash their clothes in the halls. If they have a bag, prisoners can have their clothes washed every day.

9.22 The laundry is responsible for replacing old and worn clothing as it comes in. However, the budget for this has been reduced by almost one half, and this has led to problems in replacing unsuitable items. This should be addressed.

Canteen

9.23 A 'Bag & Tag' system is in place, with stock being located in an area at the centre of the prison. It is run by four staff, assisted by one prisoner. The canteen is reasonably accessible to all parts of the accommodation areas.

9.24 The workload of the canteen staff has increased in the last year, even though there are fewer prisoners. This is partly as a result of the increased number of remand prisoners who have greater access to the canteen and more funds to spend. It is also due to a change to the telephone system which means that one of the canteen staff has to make a manual transaction for every prisoner who wants to transfer funds to his telephone account. In the past a telephone card system was in place and the cards were put in the bags with other purchases.

There was an average of 266 phone transactions per week in the four weeks prior to inspection. This can take up to two days of one member of staff's time. That equates to 10% of the total staff resource dedicated to this new task.

9.25 The main impact of this pressure is that there is little time to consult with prisoners and staff about the service. The canteen sheets have not changed for some time, reflected in the Prisoner Survey in which only 53% of prisoners were positive about the range of goods available. The SPS average is 56%. The choice of items available from the canteen should be improved.

9.26 Prisoners can also buy fruit and vegetables, pharmaceutical products, cards and flowers through the sundry purchase scheme. On the week of inspection 34 prisoners from 'D', 'E' and Friarton Halls had ordered fruit or vegetables.

10. GOOD PRACTICE

10.1 The telephone which is available to prisoners throughout the time spent in reception (paragraph 5.1).

10.2 The “Meet the Author” session which is held three or four times a year (paragraph 7.18).

10.3 If required, a Family Contact Development Officer meets disabled visitors or first time visitors before scheduled visits to explain procedures and show them the visit area (paragraph 8.4).

10.4 The SPIN co-ordinator produces a list of all ethnic minority prisoners each morning for all members of the Race Relations Committee (paragraph 8.29).

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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).

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

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

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

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

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).

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

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

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

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

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).

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

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

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).

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

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

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

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

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

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).

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

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).

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

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).

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

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

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

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

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

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).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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).

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

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

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

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

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).

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 12.49 Prisoners should be able to work towards a range of SVQ modules (paragraph 8.12).
- 12.50 The social work manager should attend ACT meetings (paragraph 8.18)
- 12.51 All social workers should have a SPIN terminal (paragraph 8.19)
- 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).
- 12.53 All prisoners should be given the opportunity to choose their meals in advance (paragraph 9.16).
- 12.54 A Catering Committee where prisoners can be consulted on the food should be established (paragraph 9.18).
- 12.55 Senior Managers should taste the meals in the kitchen or in the halls every day (paragraph 9.18).
- 12.56 A complaints book should be held in the kitchen (paragraph 9.18).
- 12.57 Old and worn clothing should be replaced when necessary (paragraph 9.22).
- 12.58 The choice of items available from the canteen should be improved (paragraph 9.25).

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

Written material and statistics received from the prison prior to Inspection

Prison's self-assessment

Governor's briefing

SPS Prisoner Survey

Prison Records

SPS background material

Discussions with prisoners

Discussions with prisoners' families

Focus groups with prisoners

Interviews with prisoners

Interviews with prison staff

Focus groups with staff

Observations

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