



PERTH PRISON VISITING COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

1 APRIL 2009 – 31 MARCH 2010

This Report was compiled by the membership of the Perth Visiting Committee 2010.

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Statutory role of the Visiting Committee

The statutory responsibilities of Visiting Committees and of their members are set out in Part 17 of The Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions (Scotland) Rules 2006. Section 8(2) of the Prisons (Scotland) Act 1989 (c.45) states: "Rules made under section 39 of this Act shall prescribe the functions of visiting committees, and shall among other things require the members to pay frequent visits to the prison and hear any complaints which may be made by the prisoners and report to Scottish Ministers any matter which they consider it expedient to report; any member of a visiting committee may at any time enter the prison and shall have free access to every part thereof and to every prisoner".

Some of the rules governing visiting committees are of a largely procedural nature relating to appointments, meetings, etc. but others spell out responsibilities which are central to the role of visiting committees, i.e.:

- they shall co-operate with Scottish Ministers and the Governor in promoting the efficiency of the prison;
- they shall inquire into and report to Scottish Ministers upon any matter into which they may ask them to inquire;
- they shall immediately bring to the attention of the Governor any circumstances pertaining to the administration of the prison or the condition of a prisoner when they consider this necessary;
- if the Governor has not remedied matters within a reasonable period of time, they shall bring the matter to the notice of Scottish Ministers;
- they shall, from time to time, inquire into the state of the prison premises and inspect the food and drink provided to the prisoners and if at any time they find these unsatisfactory they shall record any deficiencies in their minute book and send a copy to Scottish Ministers and the Governor;
- they shall hear and investigate any applications or complaints which prisoners may make to them and shall report their findings to the Governor and Scottish Ministers;
- not fewer than two members of a Visiting Committee shall visit the prison fortnightly;
- they may inspect prison records other than personal records; prisoners' records and security manuals or other papers which have implications for security and a note of their inspection shall be made in their minutes;
- they shall make annual reports for the period of 12 months ending on 31 March each year to Scottish Ministers about the state of the establishment and its administration and may include any advice and suggestions they consider appropriate;

Description of the Prison

1. Perth Prison has three Residential Halls and has a design capacity of 632. In extremis, the Establishment's Assessed Operational Limit (AOL) is 801. The latter was exceeded on several occasions during 2009, although still over numbers this has declined from last year. The Prison accommodates all sentence lengths and security categories from low to high supervision and includes both remand and convicted adults. All Halls accommodate prisoners in both single and double cells.
2. A Segregation Unit of 14 single cells is located away from the main Halls and accommodates those prisoners whom it is either not safe or appropriate to locate within the mainstream. This may be as a result of violent behaviour or serious breaches of Prison Rules.
3. Exercise facilities for the adults are provided in the gymnasium which has a sports hall and cardiovascular room, an all weather 5 a side football pitch and outside exercise areas. The Residential Halls provide facilities for playing snooker and table tennis. Dining tables in the communal areas can also be used during recreation areas for playing board games.
4. Food is prepared in the central kitchen which is located separately from the main Halls in a purpose built facility located in the Regimes building. The food is transported to the Halls in heated containers and then transferred to purpose built pantries from which it is then served to the prisoners.
5. A fully equipped laundry is located next to the kitchen and provides all laundry facilities for the entire prison.
6. A Health Centre located close to the Halls provides primary care facilities as well as mental health, addictions, dental care and specialist clinics to treat blood borne viruses, asthma and other specific health problems. .
7. A multi faith Centre is located off B Hall and provides Chaplaincy services for all faiths, a planned rebuild and relocation is now underway. Services of worship, meetings and classes take place in the Centre though the Chaplains also undertake their pastoral duties throughout the prison.
8. A comprehensive programme of education is delivered within the Regimes building and is provided by Carnegie College. A library service is provided within this programme which is administered by Perth & Kinross Council.
9. The Regimes building is also the location for the delivery of work opportunities for prisoners including wood machining and the manufacture of timber products, catering, laundry, packaging and textile manufacture. There are also vocational training workshops in the form of bricklaying, plumbing, hairdressing, industrial cleaning and painting and decorating.
10. A Visitors' Centre for prisoners' relatives and friends is now located within the prison in the new entrance to the prison. It is funded by the Robertson Trust and is managed by Crossreach with support from the Prison's Chaplaincy team and Family Contact Development Officers.

11. Huge investment has been made in redeveloping the prison to provide integral sanitation for all prisoners, to upgrade physical security and to ensure that the prison's facilities are fit for purpose in the 21st century. This has resulted in demolition of many parts of the old prison to provide a modern new hall which accommodates 363 prisoners, a Healthcare Centre, Regimes building, gymnasium, prisoners' reception area and refurbishment of existing prisoner accommodation.

The redevelopment programme is certainly on course to be completed in 2010 with the completion over the last few months of the new Gate and Visits facility, estates and stores building and other internal security upgrading. Whilst there is still extensive demolition and rebuilding work underway the end to the programme is now within sight. Refurbishment work on the A, B and C halls has been underway with facilities being upgraded with prisoner cells that should meet their needs.

These new facilities now ensure that that the prison is in the best possible position to provide a full range of opportunities to enable prisoners to address their offending behaviour and to prepare for release within a secure, structured and purposeful setting.

Executive Summary

The year has been dominated by major changes within the Visiting Committee and prison management

1. The resignation of the Chairman Trevor Bailey and the appointment of Chris Hind formerly vice chair to the position of VC Chair.
2. The appointment of Gordon Samson as vice chair who has assisted in appointing and supporting the establishment of the new committee.
3. The appointment of Stuart Brown as Training officer who has become very active in establishing Induction training for all new members.
4. The resignations of 5 members and the subsequent appointment of 10 new members to the committee under the new appointments procedure following the guidelines issued by the Association of Visiting Committees on behalf of the Scottish Government as a result of the review of Visiting Committees. The committee is currently running with 2 vacancies.
5. The change of Governor, with Kate Donegan going to join the HMP Inspectorate of Prisons and the subsequent appointment of Mike Stoney as Governor.
6. Margaret Brown's appointment as depute Governor was made substantive.
7. The changes within the management structure at HMP Perth with Phil Kennedy going to the open estate and Geoff Storer departing to SPS headquarters.
8. The closure in March of Friarton Hall which was a designated Young Offenders Institution.
9. The continuation of demolition and construction work throughout the prison together with an increase in prisoner numbers. These major issues have brought about continual change within the prison with a consequential increase in the pressure on both management and staff. The Visiting Committee is of the view that the prison has continued to cope admirably with these pressures, in particular minimising the impact on prisoners.
10. The positive inspection of HMP Perth by HMP Inspectorate which found a very healthy picture of Perth Prison, a strong team ethic and drive to achieve high standards.
11. The new visits and administration facility was now fully operational with the capacity for visitors increasing to 28 per session. This had significantly improved the facilities for both staff and visitors.
12. A full-time Family Contact Development Officer (FCDO) is in post and is involved in working to raise the profile of family contact within HMP Perth with prisoners, their families and external agencies.

The Annual Report

I am delighted to present this, my first report on behalf of, and with the cooperation of, Perth VC members. We are a developing group and have had a successful year as a team; I should also like to thank the officers of Perth & Kinross and Dundee City councils for their support of the Visiting Committee in ensuring that the selection and interview procedures now follow the procedures recommended by the Scottish Government and the AVC, also the Governor's PA Julie Sansford for typing up the visits for the committee.

Meetings

Meetings of the committee were held every two months in the Tower Boardroom of the Prison. We are grateful for the secretarial services of Mrs Yvonne Oliver and Mr Scott Hendry, who act for the clerk, Mrs G Taylor; all are employed by Perth & Kinross Council. Written reports were provided on prisoner statistics, misconduct/indiscipline, and general comments on prison matters. Reports were also provided by relevant managers on a range of services within the prison; Social Work, Learning Centre, Chaplaincy, Estates Management, Operations and Health Centre. All matters within the reports were open to questions and comments from members with further information being given on the spot or at the following meeting

The Visiting Committee has addressed the large number of vacancies resulting in the appointment of new members to the Visiting committee; this resulted in the creation of a structured training plan that was established by the newly appointed training officer Stuart Brown.

The Visiting Committee has raised many issues with all levels of prison personnel throughout the year and is satisfied that these issues have been dealt with in the appropriate manner. We are confident that we shall enjoy the continued level of support from the new Governor and staff at all grades.

The Visiting Committee is pleased that both the kitchen and laundry facilities continue to work well, we note that the training facilities within the kitchen are still now being utilised and are delighted that there is to be an application for the Healthy Living award.

The Visiting Committee continues to have concerns as to the apparent lack of constant 'contract' work for the Wood working areas of the Regime Block; although this is currently busy there are times when this results in what appears to be an underutilisation of the facilities.

The Visiting Committee also has concerns as to why secure prisoners were not allowed to attend violence reduction courses, due to issues with regard to supervision of these prisoners and the limited number of courses, this was having an impact on their being allocated progression to be considered for parole.

The Visiting Committee carried out its statutory duty during the year, visited all parts of the prison, responded to prisoner requests and completed all the appropriate records.

We commend the past Governor Kate Donegan, the current Governor Mike Stoney and the staff for their efforts in managing a challenging situation and thank them for their co-operation with the V.C. The visiting committee are as always, grateful for all the assistance given to members during the year.

Work of Visiting Committee

Chairman's Report

Chris Hind was elected Chair of the Perth VC in 2009 following the resignation of the Chair Trevor Bailey who helped lay the foundation for much of the work undertaken over the last year. The appointment and training of the large number of new members under the new rules of appointment was undertaken with the assistance of Gordon Samson and James Reid who assisted in selecting them from an able pool of applicants. This also generated a lot of enthusiasm for the duties of the VC and has allowed the rapid development of an active group. Gordon Samson was elected as vice-chair and has been active in his support of the Chair and assisting in the development of new visiting protocols. The appointment of Stuart Brown as training Officer has strengthened the team and an active training programme has been put in place for the following few years, the committee will soon have access to SPIN to assist in carrying out their duties. It is hoped in 2010/2011 to appoint members to specific roles i.e. monitoring visits, collating area visits and Equality & Diversity; these roles will further strengthen the work of the committee.

Chris Hind.

AVC Chairman's and Vice Chair Training Course Report

The meeting was organised by the AVC and was held at HMP Polmont and was attended by the Chair and vice-chair who had already carried out preparatory work on this, for the Perth VC. They were able to table various proposals to the AVC that were details being submitted to the AVC for adoption following the meeting.

Gordon Samson/Chris Hind

Association of Visiting Committees.

This is our national association, and our representative Maren Caldwell attends the business meetings. All AVC communications are circulated to our committee members.

AVC Report 2010

Maren has attended one meeting, and looks forward to participating in the future.

Maren Caldwell

Training Report

Visiting Committee Training

Stuart Brown was elected as Local Training Coordinator for Perth Prison Visiting Committee in January 2010 to assist with Local and National Training. Following a recent review of Visiting Committees by the Scottish Government two of his key duties are to produce an annual training plan for Perth and the keep individual training records for each member which must be submitted annually to the AVC.

Stuart has been working with Mr Mark Melloy, Training Manager at Perth Prison to formulate suitable in-house training for members. By the end of March all active members had either undertaken or been enrolled on self-defence /breakaway training and anti-hostage training. Those using keys during visits had also been given proper instruction and are now fully competent. With regard to local training the practice of pairing off experienced members with relatively new members was actively encouraged. This provided them with an opportunity to gain practical learning experience on a number of subjects including prisoner complaint procedures, key holder duties as well as becoming familiar with the layout of the establishment. Stuart has had the opportunity to visit the prison with a number of these members and has identified individual training needs with them in the process.

National Induction Training is planned over the coming months and speakers are being invited along to our Visiting Committee meetings to cover additional training topics. The national induction is to ensure the effective integration of members in to the organisation. The psychological manipulation module supports the development of knowledge and skills regarding the identification of psychological manipulation, the subsequent risks and responses and the effect that this has upon safety and security.

With regards to National Training an AVC Foundation Training Course was held at SPS College on the 3rd March 2010 and was attended by 6 Perth Members. There are another three AVC courses during 2010 and members of this committee will be in attendance.

Prison Area Report

Residential Accommodation

The Accommodation is generally in good condition and well maintained, there has been upgrading work to the halls and we hope this will complete within the next year. Overall the Accommodation is kept clean and tidy. The high level of occupancy which gave cause for concern has ameliorated over the course of this year.

Chris Hind

A Hall

The Accommodation is generally in good condition and well maintained; the cells were provided with tea/coffee and television. There was access to exercise and social areas. Overall the Accommodation is kept clean and tidy.

Neil Powrie, Shona Sinclair

B Hall

B Hall houses a mix of remand and convicted prisoners. Any prisoner held for deportation is also accommodated here. The unit operates remand conditions which is mainly necessary to avoid bullying and intimidation. Most prisoners, when convicted, will move to C Hall as they are unable to access work parties or programs from B Hall. The inmates in this hall have access to Education (paid to attend) and Physical Exercise. There is also the opportunity for a prisoner to get a job on the wing as a Passman and get paid for this work. The Hall is clean with good toilet and shower facilities. The Kitchen area is well equipped. An Iron and Ironing board is supplied for prisoners use. Over the last few months 11 cells have been upgraded. Improvements include metal sinks in place of the ceramic ones which inmates used to break and built in unit/shelving which stops previous instances where furniture was moved between cells by prisoners. There are excellent sign boards on the walls throughout the unit detailing all types of information to assist inmates. These messages are translated verbally for foreign prisoners where necessary and help is also given to anyone with reading problems.

We spoke to some prisoners and they informed us that there was a good relationship between staff and prisoners on the Unit. The only point they brought up was the fact that no stereos, play station or CD players were allowed in this Hall and they felt it was unfair on remand prisoners. On investigation, however, we found out that Perth Prison rules state that prisoners in B hall can have a personal Hi Fi with headphones, one hand held computer game (battery operated only) and a small radio.

S Brown. C Hind

C Hall

The floors clean, rooms used for interviews were tidy, the cells were provided with tea/coffee and television. There was access to exercise and social areas. There was constant supervision – officers on duty were talking to prisoners – with what appeared to be a pleasant atmosphere at that time. All Officers on duty were friendly and helpful and appeared to treat the prisoners with respect. There were no Health & Safety issues of concern. The premises were fit for purpose with no Improvements required.

It was noted that there was no information available regarding the Visiting Committee.

Carol Bailey

Segregation Unit

On our visits to the Segregation Unit we have observed that the difficulties with some prisoners, particularly those with mental health problems, are very high. In their work with such prisoners the officers show commendable patience and understanding.

Chris Hind, Sarah Brand

Prisoner's reception

The reception area was clean and tidy and generally in good condition. There was a First Aider on duty when we visited; the holding area had a good number of seats and several noticeboards with information available on them; the information was current. There were 3 prisoners being booked in when we attended, the officers had a list available of acceptable items for prisoner information and responsibilities for the items [SPS document - Acceptable list of Items. Revised Dec 2008]

Chris Hind, Stuart Brown

Prisoners Property Area

Located on the first floor, above the prisoners' reception area, are two rooms used to house prisoners belongings. One room has a rack system where items such as suits, shirts, jackets and coats are hung in zip up bags. These are generally items the prisoner will have worn to court but are not permitted to wear in Prison. The Officers use a manual system to record what items are stored and where so that they can be easily retrieved when an inmate needs them to return to Court or on release. This type of storage makes good use of space and keeps items from getting too creased. The second room is used to store boxes which have prisoners items in them. Due to the fact these could be treated as goods and traded between prisoners there is a restriction on the amount and type of items a prisoner may have allocated to him at any given time. Any excess or unsuitable items are stored in these boxes. An Officer will record the prisoner's property and ask the individual to check it and sign the form to agree that it is accurate. Expensive items such as money and jewellery is held in an office downstairs in the Reception area. The system for recording, storing and distributing prisoners property works extremely well with misplaced items a very rare occurrence despite the volume of items involved.

There is an ITEMS IN USE list for each category of Prisoner. These lists are available in all residential halls and reception. All other items are privileges and as such can be varied at the discretion of the Governor or removed from an individual prisoner following Orderly Room adjudications in accordance with rule 119(b). Items not included on the Prisoner's ITEMS IN USE list will not be allowed in use unless directed by the Residential Unit Manager. He also has the authority to accept at his discretion items not on the list but which have been previously allowed in use at another SPS establishment prior to transfer to HMP Perth. Any item coming in to the establishment must meet the required fire or other safety standards before being issued. For convenience and specification of electrical items HMP Perth insists these are purchased through Argos. The main issue prisoners have with this arrangement is the fact that they cannot purchase a play station 2 as this store does not stock them.

Stuart Brown

Healthcare and Mental Healthcare

The health centre presents in very good condition, appearing clean and bright and no areas that were detected that were unsanitary or in need of repair. The facilities for prisoners are excellent. The health centre has various treatment rooms as well as "holding" rooms for prisoners waiting to be seen by members of the health centre team. All treatment rooms appear well equipped and up to a high standard. The nurses hold many clinics throughout the day and work on two shift patterns to cover from 7am until 10pm. The nurses also visit the halls to ensure prisoners who require medication are dispensed this without having to go the health centre. There are also numerous outside agencies that visit the centre such as dentistry, chiropody, dermatology and also for accessing outpatient and hospital admissions. The doctors work different days to ensure there is adequate cover. Premises appear to be very suitable for use and no comments from the nursing staff in regard to this area. No improvements or Health & Safety issues required: We were also informed that there is a very good success rate at reducing the drug use in long term prisoners which was not highlighted in the recent inspection report. All the Healthcare professionals working in the mental health team were informed that

they are undergoing a period of change at present where it is expected that around October 2011 they will change from being employed by The Scottish Prison Service to The National Health Service. This is a transitional period for staff with some uncertainty with hopefully as little change to staff and prisoners. The health centre appears to run very well and this I feel is due to dedicated, committed and hardworking staff who are aiming to help as many prisoners as possible.

Gordon Samson, Sarah Brand

Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy is presently located in temporary accommodation on the ground floor of B Hall. No issues in regard to suitability of premises. The amount of space is limited and in particular causes difficulties in providing adequate facilities for worship by all faiths. Chairs on both sides approx. 4 rows of 5 chairs on each side. Hymn books on every chair. Hand washing and tea making facilities. Graham Matthews [Minister] is very engaging with individuals and very positive and encouraging of those attending the service. Very positive atmosphere despite low attendance on the day of our visit it was very peaceful. Conditions were good and appeared suitable and fit for purpose. No area detected that made it unsuitable. No Areas of concern or Health & Safety issues. The construction of the new multi-faith centre will commence mid 2010 within the present on-going reconstruction programme. In addition to the pastoral care provided by the Chaplains, Fellowship Groups play a role in the care of prisoner's spiritual welfare. These groups are run by volunteers. Volunteers also work in the visitors centre under the auspices of Cross Reach, a Church of Scotland charity.

Gordon Samson, Sarah Brand

Kitchen

The provision of food has generally been of an acceptable standard. Prisoners have on occasion complained 1) of quantity and 2) of food becoming cold before serving - this seems to have arisen with prisoners receiving their food towards the end of the serving. VC members have not experienced these conditions during their visits. The kitchen is being put forward for the Healthy Living award that involves all aspects of healthy diets.

Stephen Blackwood

Gymnasium

The area was recently built, 3 years ago with good shower and toilet facilities. There is storage space for cleaning equipment, a fridge and a laundry for dirty towels etc. There is an indoor football area / multi gym area for badminton and tennis, free weights area and fitness equipment that is maintained under an SPS contract; although the repair times were not enforced as well as might be. The prisoners are given an induction to the facilities and there were minimal injuries recorded. Capacity was for 30 prisoners if 2 officers were on duty, 15 at weekends when 1 was on duty, with a further 12 prisoners able to use the football facilities out of doors. There was 67% uptake of facilities, most halls were given 4 sessions / week, but this could be increased with a larger budget was available, best use was being made of Friarton staff to allow more use of facilities. There were many benefits to prisoners who were required to show they were either drug free or on a programme before they were allowed to access the facilities. There were 2 extra sessions made available to C Hall that was fully utilised. Prisoners were encouraged by staff to maintain good personal hygiene and most were receptive to this. There was a good relationship and rapport between staff and prisoners and one benefit was the 7-a-side indoor football tournament, the winners getting to play the staff side team. A report several years ago demonstrated the positive benefits to the prisoners and this would still appear to be the case.

Chris Hind, Stuart Brown

Library

We were very impressed with the variety of material on offer which catered for all abilities. The range covers classic works to modern authors and manuals. It is obvious that the librarian listens to the needs of her customers and liaises with Perth and Kinross Library Service to ensure a constant turnover of materials. We were delighted to hear that the librarian's work is being rewarded by a high uptake. Although the library has problems in being very hot in summer, its appearance compares well with libraries in the community.

Jim Reid, Maren Caldwell

Social Work

The Social Work Unit had been inspected by the Social Work Inspection Agency in April 2010. This had been part of an overall inspection of prison-based social work units and services, a formal report has not yet made available to the Visiting Committee. The premises appear to be suitable, with waiting rooms and classrooms for prisoners, no improvements or Health & Safety issues seem to be required.

There are 6 Social Workers and a Team Leader. They each have a case load of 40 – 50 prisoners who have to be serving 4 years or more before they are seen by a Social Worker. There is an Integrated Case Management [ICM] meeting once a year for all prisoners which prepare a report for the Parole Board. There are 20 plus meetings per month. The Social Workers have to prepare ICM reports and have a high case load of 250 – 270 prisoners which is too much. Protection prisoners only are seen twice a week. Housing is very difficult. There is little provision for prisoners with under 4 year sentences 30 – 40 prisoners move on each month. A Social Worker from Friarton is going to Noranside. His Case Load will have to be divided between the others. There is a lot of movement with prisoners. There is not enough time to help prisoners to move forward.

Vera Joiner

Phoenix house

Everywhere seems clean and tidy and all in order. Prisoners are taken to a Waiting Room, and then taken to an Interview Room. There is a classroom for Inductions. These are held twice a day. They are taught how to access the service. Listeners come in also and there is a power-point presentation. Prisoners are seen at least every 6 weeks but it can be as often as every 2 weeks. They go through de-tox within days of coming in. This is done at the Health Centre. They don't have Alcohol Counsellors to assist with Alcohol awareness. Although they feel that the layout is not perfect for their requirements, they can cope and manage well. There is no way they can make alterations. They are short-staffed at present. This makes it difficult to comply with the time-scales set down by SPS in the SPS Contract. Prisoners are there by self-referral. There is Substance Misuse Assessment; Prisoners must be stable for 5 weeks before release. It is a voluntary service and is not suitable for short-term prisoners. They must be in for 2 months or over. Health & Safety issues it is not currently possible to see prisoners within 5 days.

Vera Joiner, Chris Hind & Stuart Brown

Education

The staff and facilities provided by the Learning Centre make an excellent contribution to the welfare of the prisoners. We are grateful to Brian Cunningham, the Learning Centre Manager, and his staff for their commitment and dedication. This is currently out for contract renewal and the outcome of the tender process is awaited.

Jim Reid, Maren Caldwell

VT Plumbers

The premises appeared suitable; with no improvements or apparent Health & Safety issues required to be addressed all persons appeared to have protective footwear/ clothing with constant supervision the room appeared to be well suited to the use it was

being put to. 12 prisoners use the area at any given time and the area and facilities are easily big enough to accommodate this number. The area was clean and tidy with toilet facilities and a good temperature in the area and appeared to be well stocked with tools and necessary classroom facilities, there were facilities for prisoners to make themselves a hot drink and sit down for a break, secure area for own footwear and access to practical and theoretical help from Officer who enjoys the role and commands respect and liking from the prisoners in the area who were all very complimentary as to his knowledge of the subject and his ability to teach, help and motivate.

Peer mentoring is in place, prisoners all had a genuine pride in what they had achieved and believed it would be beneficial to them on release.

Carol Bailey

VT Hairdressers

The premises appeared suitable, with no improvements required or apparent Health & safety issues, the area was clean and tidy with no equipment lying around, teaching aids were available and an area to sit for theory work and to have a break; as there were no prisoners. Unable to see interaction with prisoners as there were no prisoners in at time of visit the area was empty apart from the Officer who was more than happy to explain what went on in a normal day and who enjoys the job.

Carol Bailey

VT Bricklayers

This is located in a small shed which appeared to be in good condition and good light from outside access. The area is kept in good working order. There are toilets and break out areas for prisoners. Hand washing would be available in bathroom. Premises appeared fit for purpose and no issues in regard to suitability. Prisoners very involved in learning building skills and all tools and materials available to them for their use. No Health & Safety issues or improvements required; there were no issues identified as a concern by staff or prisoners.

Sarah Brand

VT Painters

There are notices in the VT area to sign in for each area; the premises are in very good condition, with a clean and tidy area with several fire extinguishers, Health & Safety notice boards, a Health & Safety inspection was carried out 3 weeks ago; 2 fire escapes are in the workshop, with several sinks available for designated tasks. There is adequate cupboard space for all the materials. There are toilet facilities on site, an area for tea refreshments and a study area for course work. Inmates from C Hall [convicted and B Hall [remand] are able to attend for training. Since the last inspection an extraction system has been installed that assists the cleanup of materials. The process of selection for candidates has ended, but within several weeks those not interested usually move on, leaving places for the more involved. The training can lead to certificates in painting & decorating; this is inspected internally by SPS but an external validation is expected by SQA this year. A local businessman will judge internal work by the inmates. Examples of artwork by prisoners were demonstrated that are to be hung up in the prison, as it is of such a good standard.

Chris Hind, Sarah Brand

VT Tailors

This was located in a large shed which accommodates packing party of prisoners packing tea, coffee and sugar for the halls. The sewing party were involved in making various items to be sold including suicide suits. The premises in good condition and all machines appeared to be in good working order. A toilet and break area is available for prisoners. Prisoners said the morale and atmosphere was overall okay and the sewing party seemed to enjoy what they were doing and said they got plenty of variety, with access to help from prison staff at any time. Premises were suitable and fit for use. No

Health & Safety issues or improvements required. The Tailors Area operates smoothly and benefits from long term contracts.

Sarah Brand

VT Joiners

The area was located along with the other VT training units; it was currently busy with a large contract, although this was coming to an end. The area was well maintained although hot, the back door was opened to allow cooling. There were a number of Health & Safety notices displayed. There was a good atmosphere between staff and inmates.

Chris Hind, Eleanor Carroll

VT Wood assembly

The areas were generally in good condition and well maintained. Training Plans for each area are in place and appear to be working well including the progression of prisoners through the overall programme. With regard to the Work Areas it would appear that on occasions prisoners who do not want to be at work (and often do not work) are allocated giving staff unnecessary difficulties. A system of positive selection would assist. With regard to the Joinery and Wood Assembly areas the absence of long term contracts for products is still an issue.

Chris Hind, Eleanor Carroll

Industrial cleaning

This is a new training course set up to train inmates in cleaning of the areas; the course takes up to 8 trainees at a time and can last 3 – 4 weeks. Currently only C Hall inmates are trained, but it is planned to train Pass men in all areas of the prison so that inmates are of the required standard, trained to understand the Health & Safety requirements and all areas will have inmates trained to the same standard.

Chris Hind

Laundry

The Laundry is extremely busy and rather cramped for the amount of throughput whilst the laundry is currently operating well; they are in need of bigger premises that would then meet all health and safety requirements. We are pleased that this was picked up by the HMP Inspectorate during their visit. The VC is advised that the Laundry is to be upgraded when these concerns will be addressed as it is not fit for purpose. Machines were out of use at the time of our visit and were waiting on repair. It has already been identified that there are several health and safety issues mainly in regard to fire regulations and space issues when laundry equipment is being used. Health & Safety issues were noted in regard to the use of laundry equipment posing risk in the event of evacuation in the event of a fire.

Gordon Samson, Sarah Brand

Equality and Diversity

The SPS is committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights. This is evident in the treatment and provision for prisoners at HMP Perth. The Prison is aware of its responsibilities and has a committee in place and it sets high standards and strives to adhere to these; Equalities and Diversities Committee of HMP Perth are looking to recruit a member of the VC the appointment will be made during 2010.

Chris Hind, Vera Joiner

Link Centre

The Link Centre co-ordinates the work of several Agencies in assisting prisoners with their difficulties relating to matters occurring both within and out with the prison. The VC does not generally receive prisoner referrals regarding this area of the Prison's work. The formal launch of the Tayside inter-agency protocols, 'Pathways for Short-term Prisoners', took place on 25 June 2010, the development of these protocols are being held up as best practice across public sector prisons and across Scotland.

The Agencies which assist prisoners are:-

Shelter Housing Aid Centre

Job Centre Plus

Criminal Justice Tayside

Criminal Justice Fife

Apex

Careers Scotland

Phoenix futures

Alcoholics Anon

Gamblers Anon

NCH Scotland

Six Circle

Future Challenges for HMP Perth

A local Strategic Assessment had been produced, in line with national policy, by Intel Management Unit, outlining the direct threats to HMP Perth. It was noted that the three major threats were recognised as drugs, mobile telephones and violence. Staff were currently involved in a joint police operation under the "Safer Scotland" initiative and continued to liaise with Community Police to increase partnership working within the local area.

Drugs & Mobile Phones

The frequency of incidents relating to drugs and mobile phones entering and within the prison has been a continuing concern to the VC, this was also picked up during the visit by the HMP Inspectorate; but at the same time we must congratulate prison staff for their vigilance and success in detection.

Violence

There is a zero tolerance for violence in the prison, there are notices displayed throughout the prison informing prisoners of what to do if they are being threatened. Where there is an incident this is recorded and further action is taken, this may include being taken to court.

Visiting Committee Membership

There were **five** resignations during the period:

Trevor Bailey [Chair], Will Herald [Training Officer], Steve Blackwood, Cllr Ann Cowan and Cllr Robert Band.

New members welcomed

Carol Bailey, Sarah Brand, Stuart Brown, Maren Caldwell, Eleanor Carroll, Alison Craig, Vera Joiner, Bobby Mangto, Cllr Dave Scott, and Shona Sinclair.

We welcomed back:

Neil Powrie after a period of ill health.

The Committee has a compliment of 19 members [10 appointed by Perth and Kinross and 9 appointed by Dundee City]; there are currently 2 vacancies.

Visits to the Prison

There were 46 visits made to the Prison by our members. All members visited on a rota basis to monitor conditions within the prison and to ensure all prisoners has access to a member of the Visiting Committee throughout the year. It has been agreed that rota visits will now be on a weekly basis, rather than fortnightly, this will allow a higher level of visits to the prison by the members of the VC. In addition, members made visits at other times, sometimes on a follow-up basis to prisoner complaints, sometimes to visit and monitor particular parts of the prison. All targets had been met apart from the delivery of vocational/work-related qualifications.

Meetings

Meetings of the committee were held every two months in the Tower Boardroom of the Prison. We are grateful for the secretarial services of Jim Adamson [now retired], Yvonne Oliver, and Scott Hendry, who act for the clerk, Mrs G Taylor; all are employed by Perth & Kinross Council.

The Governor or representative has attended part of each meeting since his appointment.

Written reports were provided on prisoner statistics, misconduct/indiscipline, and general comments on prison matters. Reports were also provided by relevant managers on a range of services within the prison; Social Work, Learning Centre, Chaplaincy, Estates Management, Operations and Health Centre. All matters within the reports were open to questions and comments from members with further information being given on the spot or at the following meeting.

Members were also kept up to date with the work of the Association of Visiting Committees of which Neil Powrie is Chairman, the Perth VC member id Maren Caldwell. The Review of Visiting Committees is still on-going and changes are still required especially the renaming to an Independent Monitoring Board.

On behalf of all members of Perth Prison Visiting Committee I wish to thank the Governor, Deputy Governor, members of the Senior Management Team, all Officers and Administrative Staff for their courtesy and assistance throughout the last year.



Chris Hind
Chair, Perth Visiting Committee

Members of Perth Prison Visiting Committee

No.	Name	Appointing authority	Date appointed	Committee meetings attended	Prisoners visited	Area visit reports
1	C Bailey	Dundee	2009	2	0	3
2	S Brand	Perth	2009	3	15	6
3	S Brown	Perth	2009	2	10	5
4	M Caldwell	Perth	2009	3	1	2
5	E Carroll	Dundee	2009	2	0	2
6	A Craig	Perth	2009	2	0	1
7	C Hind	Dundee	2006	2	5	11
8	G Jain	Perth	< 2007	3	5	0
9	V Joiner	Dundee	2009	2	0	4
10	J Macaulay	Dundee	2007	5	7	1
11	R Mangto	Perth	2010	-	0	0
12	N Powrie	Dundee	< 2007	4	0	1
13	J Reid	Dundee	2007	5	13	2
14	G Samson	Dundee	< 2007	5	25	2
15	Cllr D Scott	Perth	2010	1	0	0
16	S Sinclair	Perth	2009	1	2	2
17	Cllr H Stewart	Perth	< 2007	-	5	1
18	Vacant	Dundee		-	-	-
19	Vacant	Perth		-	-	-

Where there are 0 prisoners visited this is mainly down to newly appointed VC members.