

Manawatū Prison

Announced Inspection

April 2023



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Office of Inspectorate | *Te Tari Tirohia*

Our whakatauki

Mā te titiro me te whakarongo ka puta mai te māramatanga

By looking and listening, we will gain insight

Our vision

That prisoners and offenders are treated in a fair, safe, secure and humane way.

Our values

Respect – We are considerate of the dignity of others

Integrity – We are ethical and do the right thing

Professionalism – We are competent and focused

Objectivity – We are open-minded and do not take sides

Diversity – We are inclusive and value difference

We also acknowledge the Department of Corrections' values: rangatira (leadership), manaaki (respect), wairua (spirituality), kaitiaki (guardianship) and whānau (relationships).



Foreword

The Office of the Inspectorate | *Te Tari Tirohia* is a critical part of the independent oversight of the Corrections system and operates under the Corrections Act 2004 and the Corrections Regulations 2005. The Inspectorate, while part of the Department of Corrections, is operationally independent, which is necessary to ensure objectivity and integrity.

This report sets out our findings of an announced inspection of Manawatū Prison. This was the Inspectorate's first inspection of an entire prison site since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

This inspection report, as with others, does not make recommendations. This is purposeful and the intent is to ensure the site takes ownership of the report and develops an action plan in response. In that way the site can properly take ownership of matters within its control. I also expect the site to work alongside Corrections national office, when necessary, to implement an action plan to address areas that require capital investment, or a policy or practice change.

This was the first inspection to use the new *Leadership Standards* which I released in March 2023. These standards supplement the *Inspection Standards* my team uses to assess the conditions, procedures and practices at a prison site. The performance of its leaders is, in my view, a bellwether of how well a site is functioning. During this inspection, I found that Manawatū Prison's leaders were generally visible, accessible and consistent. This was contributing to improved staff morale.

It is pleasing to note that since our last follow-up inspection of Manawatū Prison in 2019, and the more recent inspection in 2021 by the Chief Ombudsman, the site has made real progress on a number of fronts. I attribute that progress in large part to the leadership of the Acting Prison Director and her team.

For the first time in a prison inspection report, I have chosen to highlight some areas of notable positive practice. Firstly, and importantly, to recognise the efforts of staff. Secondly, in the hope that other prison directors will look to these areas of good practice and consider implementing them at their sites.

There are two particular areas I want to highlight and commend.

Firstly, since late 2022, the site has been holding regular prison forums (known as 'prisoner welfare groups'), which give the men an opportunity to raise issues or concerns directly with senior leaders. These forums have proved to be a positive initiative and I urge other sites to explore how they may best introduce something similar.

Secondly, the site had repurposed the gym for a short course on scaffolding, as the gym could not be used for its usual purpose due to short staffing. This was a creative response that gave both remand and sentenced prisoners a constructive activity.



In addition, at the time of our inspection, none of the men were required to share cells; I know they welcomed having some personal space. Whilst I acknowledge that this is not always possible at other sites, I do urge the Department to consider, where possible, providing this. It is important that I address some of the ongoing challenges for the site, which are largely outside the control of the Acting Prison Director.

The site was operating under a Staffing Level Response Roster based on 80% staffing. It was also accommodating a high proportion of remand prisoners who had limited access to programmes and rehabilitative opportunities. The design of the site, by virtue of the date it was built, posed a constant challenge despite ongoing remedial and maintenance work.

The site continues not to have an Intervention and Support Unit, which is a significant limitation, though I acknowledge the best efforts of staff to manage those who are at risk of self-harm. I welcome the fact that the safe cells had not been used to house men at risk of self-harm since 2019, as these were clearly not fit for purpose.

Likewise, I commend the decommissioning of the separates cells in B Block, which had also not been used since 2019 as they were also not deemed fit for purpose.

I look forward to reviewing the site's action plan to address the areas that require attention, identified in this report, as part of my ongoing monitoring of the site.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Janis Adair
Chief Inspector

Our findings

1. This report sets out observations from our announced inspection for Manawatū Prison. Manawatū Prison is a men's prison located in Linton, just south of Palmerston North. At the time of our inspection, the prison housed 145 remand and 75 sentenced prisoners: a total of 220 men. Sentenced prisoners were minimum to high security.
2. We inspected Manawatū Prison between 17 and 21 April 2023.

Leadership

- Finding 1. Staff morale was generally good due to visible leadership from the Acting Prison Director and some senior leaders, including principal corrections officers.
- Finding 2. The site was operating at a reduced staffing level and with a high proportion of remand prisoners which meant it was difficult for staff and other stakeholders to prioritise improving outcomes for prisoners.
- Finding 3. Uncertainty over staffing levels and prisoner demographics made it difficult for leaders to give clear messages to staff about how the site would be transitioned to pre-COVID-19 levels of service, including timeframes for achieving this.

Escorts, reception and induction

- Finding 4. Due to reduced staffing levels, many remand prisoners had first been transferred from Palmerston North court to Whanganui Prison and then, later, to Manawatū Prison.
- Finding 5. Due to the high remand population, men from the area were being transferred to other prisons.
- Finding 6. Communication with prisoners about transfers was generally good.
- Finding 7. Most prisoners had experienced decent conditions during transfers, but some had comfort and safety concerns about travelling in PEVs.
- Finding 8. The Receiving Office was clean and well-organised and men were generally received according to the correct procedures. Staff treated prisoners with respect and met their immediate needs.
- Finding 9. During busy times there could be an insufficient number of holding cells in the Receiving Office. However, staff were managing this safely.
- Finding 10. Most men received a unit induction, but some others said they had not and had learned unit routines and rules from other men.
- Finding 11. Health staff completed the Reception Health Triage appropriately and arranged medications and follow-up assessments promptly.

Duty of care

- Finding 12. Prisoners had reasonable access to consult with a legal adviser, though telephone calls to lawyers had to be made with staff present which was a privacy issue and not in alignment with the protection of legal privilege.
- Finding 13. The AVL suite was in good order, well supported by staff, and available for eligible court cases and legal consultations.
- Finding 14. Prisoners generally felt safe from bullying and intimidation.
- Finding 15. Staff acknowledged that some intimidation did occur and demonstrated a good understanding of how to deal with such issues.
- Finding 16. Safer Custody Panel meetings were held regularly, well documented, and well attended by appropriate staff and senior managers.
- Finding 17. The prison's Violence and Aggression Reduction plan was current and under regular review.
- Finding 18. The prisoner file management system was in good order and paper-based files were stored in secure locations.
- Finding 19. Prisoners of different categories were either kept apart or managed well together, including those managed in accordance with the approved exemption to mix.
- Finding 20. The prison was mixing remand accused with other categories of prisoners in Te Whare Mahi unit, but was unable to provide an exemption to mix for this unit.
- Finding 21. There were no prisoners sharing a cell at the time of our inspection.
- Finding 22. Prisoners generally understood the complaints process and the system appeared to be working well. However, telephone numbers for external oversight agencies were not displayed in all units.
- Finding 23. Regular Prison Forums were being held; these were attended by prisoner representatives and senior managers.
- Finding 24. There were limited opportunities for men to take part in Māori cultural activities.
- Finding 25. Property was held securely, and prisoners reported that they could generally access their property within reasonable timeframes. However, the largest number of complaints were in the property category.
- Finding 26. Prisoners raised no issues regarding their trust accounts.

Health

- Finding 27. Prisoners' health needs were generally being met, though prisoners with non-urgent needs sometimes had to wait to see a nurse or the medical officer.
- Finding 28. Custodial staff provided good support when they were available, but due to staff shortages there were often not enough custodial staff available to assist with

- movements to all health clinics. This meant wait times were longer and the medical officer had to work longer hours to see everyone on his list.
- Finding 29. Prisoners generally had access to specialised external secondary and tertiary health care services when required.
- Finding 30. Medication charts were well-maintained and regularly reviewed by the Medical Officer.
- Finding 31. All prisoner files we reviewed showed evidence that an Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) had been completed.
- Finding 32. There was limited support available for prisoners with a history of substance abuse. In particular, there had been no support available for remand prisoners.
- Finding 33. There were some issues with drug diversion at the site and further monitoring was required.
- Finding 34. Prisoners could access an Improving Mental Health clinician, though there was a two-to-three-month waitlist to see this clinician. A new Clinical Nurse Specialist (Mental Health) had been appointed recently and this was reducing waitlist times. Both clinicians struggled to find suitable interview and group therapy rooms.
- Finding 35. The site was well-supported by the local forensic mental health team.
- Finding 36. The site does not have an Intervention and Support Unit and the assessment and transfer of prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm was sometimes challenging. The Health Centre Manager was working to improve these areas of practice.
- Finding 37. The site's safe cells had not been used since June 2022 as at-risk prisoners were being transferred to the Intervention and Support Unit at Whanganui Prison.
- Finding 38. Prisoners with disabilities or special needs appeared to be managed appropriately.
- Finding 39. Annual health reviews for older prisoners were not occurring regularly.

Environment

- Finding 40. All residential units were clean and had communal areas where men could associate if they wished.
- Finding 41. Despite general cleanliness and maintenance improvements in B Block, the physical layout continued to create ongoing challenges for safe custodial operations and was not conducive to the health and wellbeing of prisoners.
- Finding 42. Some cells in C Block and Te Whare Mahi unit required painting and some cells in Te Whare Mahi needed repairs. Yards in C Block also required painting and one of the yard telephones needed repair.
- Finding 43. Prisoners had access to sufficient quantities of clean bedding.
- Finding 44. The site's separates cells had not been used since 2019 and prisoners now serve cell confinement penalties in their own cells.

- Finding 45. Prisoners had good access to showers and toiletries, although showers in Te Whare Mahi unit often had insufficient hot water.
- Finding 46. Men in B Block and C Block could not always access appropriately sized clothing.
- Finding 47. Men in Te Kaitiaki Wairua and Te Whare Mahi units had access to clean, appropriately sized clothing.
- Finding 48. Prisoners' meals were good quality and all prisoners had access to clean drinking water.
- Finding 49. Meals were generally served at appropriate times, though some evening meals were served at 4:30pm.

Good order

- Finding 50. Staff generally conducted the appropriate security procedures in a professional manner.
- Finding 51. The prison environment was not unnecessarily restrictive and seemed proportionate to the risk levels of prisoners.
- Finding 52. Remediation work to inward-opening doors in the C Block programmes room was documented as completed which meant the room could be used for constructive activities.
- Finding 53. Prisoners were appropriately classified and placed in accordance with their risk and needs.
- Finding 54. Records indicated that some directed segregation orders were revoked early which showed prison management was actively reviewing behaviour on segregation.
- Finding 55. The prison offered limited incentives to encourage prosocial behaviour among the men.
- Finding 56. Nearly a quarter of misconducts had been withdrawn, usually for reasons beyond the site's control.
- Finding 57. The site's prosecutor was being deployed to support with visits on Fridays due to the low staffing levels. This impacted on the preparation of misconduct files.
- Finding 58. The site had a good number of hearing adjudicators and no misconducts had been withdrawn due to a lack of hearing adjudicators.
- Finding 59. There was no evidence that health staff had participated in any disciplinary sanctions.
- Finding 60. There were no use of force review dates recorded in the 2022 use of force register, but the 2023 register did record these dates.
- Finding 61. The site was recording searches where contraband was found, although there was insufficient recording of other searches and some items found were incorrectly categorised.

Finding 62. Some rub-down searches were only of reasonable quality as staff did not always rub down all areas of the person.

Purposeful activity

Finding 63. The main prison gym was closed and the gym instructor had been redeployed to assist with reduced staffing levels.

Finding 64. All prisoners could exercise in outdoor yards for at least an hour a day.

Finding 65. Men in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit had many exercise and recreation options and were out of their cells for many hours during the day.

Finding 66. Men in B Block had three hours out of their cells for exercise and fairly limited access to exercise equipment.

Finding 67. Prisoners in C Block and Te Whare Mahi unit had limited access to exercise equipment.

Finding 68. Prisoners welcomed the new free telephone calls, though some prisoners reported having more difficulty accessing the telephones due to increased usage.

Finding 69. Prisoners could send and receive mail.

Finding 70. Prisoners could receive visits in a welcoming environment.

Finding 71. The majority of the prisoners we interviewed were not local to the area which may have impacted upon their ability to have face-to-face visits.

Finding 72. Some prisoners and visitors felt the minimum entitlement 30-minute visits were too short, especially for those visitors who had to travel longer distances.

Finding 73. Prisoners could access AVL visits and appreciated these.

Finding 74. Prisoners could generally access library services and reading materials by choosing from a catalogue. However, most men could not visit the site library.

Finding 75. There was limited access to rehabilitation programmes for eligible prisoners at the site.

Finding 76. Most sentenced prisoners had an offender plan and reported that access to case managers was good.

Finding 77. There were limited programmes available for remand prisoners.

Finding 78. Not all prisoners were aware who their case officer was.

Finding 79. Sentenced prisoners had access to a wide range of education focused programmes, though there was limited access for remand prisoners.

Finding 80. The site had proactively re-purposed the site gym to provide a short course on scaffolding and working at heights, which provided a good training opportunity.

Finding 81. Sentenced prisoners in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit had good access to work opportunities, but there was limited access to work in other units.

Finding 82. Prisoners had access to chaplains, but custodial staff shortages and lack of suitable facilities were impacting on their ability to provide spiritual support.

Reintegration

Finding 83. There were limited opportunities for the case management team to work with prisoners through their rehabilitation and reintegration pathways as many prisoners were transferred following sentencing or were on remand.

Finding 84. Access to accommodation could be an issue for some prisoners on release, particularly those who had been on voluntary segregation.

Finding 85. There was no bail support officer at the site, and some staff highlighted that there could be a lack of reintegrative support for men released on bail.

Finding 86. Only one prisoner was accessing the Release to Work programme, and the site was working to increase this.

Finding 87. Prisoners had opportunities to keep up with news and the outside world.

Prison staff

Finding 88. Staff morale was generally high, but staff were concerned about ongoing custodial staff shortages and the impact of these on staff health and wellbeing.

Finding 89. We observed staff behaving in a professional and empathetic manner with prisoners across the site.

Finding 90. Health and custodial staff had good working relationships, though custodial staff shortages sometimes impacted on the delivery of health services.

Finding 91. Job satisfaction was reported as low for some members of the case management team due to the large numbers of remand prisoners who were transferred away from the site once sentenced.

Introduction

3. The Office of the Inspectorate | *Te Tari Tirohia* is authorised under section 29(1)(b) of the Corrections Act 2004 to undertake inspections and visits to prisons. Section 157 of the Act provides that when undertaking an inspection, inspectors have the power to access any prisoners, personnel, records, information, Corrections' vehicles or property.
4. The purpose of an Inspectorate prison inspection is to ensure a safe, secure and humane environment by gaining insight into all relevant parts of prison life, including any emerging risks, issues or problems. Inspectors assess prison conditions, management procedures and operational practices against relevant legislation and our Inspection Standards.
5. The Inspection Standards were developed by the Inspectorate and reflect the prison environment and procedures applicable in New Zealand prisons. In early 2023, we expanded the Inspection Standards to include a series of standards on leadership. Our inspection of Manawatū Prison was the first in New Zealand to use the expanded standards. The Inspection Standards are informed by:
 - » the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners ('the Nelson Mandela Rules')
 - » HM Inspectorate of Prisons Expectations (England and Wales' equivalent criteria for assessing the treatment and conditions of prisoners)
 - » the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders ('the Bangkok Rules')
 - » the Yogyakarta Principles, which guide the application of human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity.
6. We note that the Office of the Ombudsman is also mandated as a national preventive mechanism¹ to examine and monitor the treatment of people in prisons.
7. The Inspectorate visited Manawatū Prison between 17 and 21 April 2023 to carry out this inspection. Our previous visit to Manawatū Prison was for a follow-up inspection in 2019.
8. At the time of our inspection, Manawatū Prison was operating under a Staffing Level Response Roster based on 80% staffing. This situation was reflective of ongoing staffing shortages at prison sites nationwide.
9. Prisoner demographics at Manawatū Prison had changed since our last inspection in 2019. There was a higher proportion of remand prisoners and the population had become more transient than previously.
10. The fieldwork for the inspection was completed by four Inspectors and a Clinical Inspector for health-related matters. The inspection was overseen by a Principal Inspector. The Assistant Chief Inspector focused primarily on application of the new leadership standards.
11. Inspectors assessed the treatment and conditions of prisoners at Manawatū Prison against the Inspection Standards which consider the following areas of prison life: leadership, escorts, reception and induction, duty of care, health, environment, good order, purposeful activity,

¹ National Preventive Mechanisms are independent visiting bodies, established at a national level, to examine the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees, and make recommendations for improvement. They aim to ensure the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

- reintegration and prison staff. Inspectors accessed all parts of the prison to complete their assessment.
12. Inspectors may also evaluate how the site is applying the Corrections Act 2004 and the Corrections Regulations 2005, together with relevant Corrections' policies and procedures.
 13. Inspectors make their assessments with four key principles in mind, to ensure prisoners are treated in a fair, safe, secure and humane way. The principles are:
 - » **Safety:** Prisoners are held safely.
 - » **Respect:** Prisoners are treated with respect for human dignity.
 - » **Purposeful activity:** Prisoners are able, and expect, to engage in activity that is likely to benefit them.
 - » **Reintegration:** Prisoners are prepared for release into the community and helped to reduce their likelihood of reoffending.
 14. Inspectors carried out:
 - » one-to-one and focus group interviews with prisoners from all units across the prison
 - » one-to-one and group interviews with staff members, managers, union representatives, volunteers and service providers
 - » direct observation of unit procedures, staff duties and relevant staff meetings during the inspection
 - » a physical inspection of the prison environment, including the Health Centre
 - » a review and analysis of relevant information and data from the prison and Corrections databases
 - » a review of previous Manawatū prison inspection reports by the Office of the Ombudsman.
 15. We were informed by Correction's Hōkai Rangi Strategy 2019-2024 which sets out a strategic direction, aimed at achieving transformative and intergenerational change for prisoners and their whānau.
 16. On 31 August 2023, we provided the National Commissioner and Deputy Chief Executive Health with a draft of this report. They responded to the draft on 6 October 2023 and the response is attached as Appendix B.

Manawatū Prison

18. Manawatū Prison is one of 15 prisons for men in New Zealand. It is located in Linton, just south of Palmerston North, in Corrections' Lower North region. Originally built in 1979 as a youth facility, it became a prison in 1985, and we note the prison design is dated.

Prisoners

19. Manawatū Prison can accommodate up to 251 men, including remand and sentenced prisoners with minimum to high security classifications.
20. At the time of our inspection, Manawatū Prison housed 220 prisoners. Seventy-five men (34%) had been sentenced. One-hundred-and-forty-five men (66%) were on remand, with 82 remand convicted and 63 remand accused. This represents an increase in the proportion of prisoners on remand since our last inspection in 2019.² It also meant Manawatū Prison was managing one of the highest proportions of remand prisoners in the country.³ This was significant as remand prisoners generally have higher needs and are not eligible for rehabilitation programmes.
21. The high proportion of remand prisoners meant the site could not accommodate as many sentenced prisoners, even if they were from the area. Many sentenced prisoners were spending only short periods of time at Manawatū Prison before being transferred to other prisons to serve their sentences.

Unit name	Category of prisoner	Available beds (Operational capacity)	Number of prisoners (on day one of our inspection)
B Block	Mainly remand prisoners	47	20
C Block A Wing 1	Mainly remand prisoners	30	30
C Block A Wing 2	Remand prisoners on Voluntary Segregation	32	32
C Block B Wing 3	Remand prisoners	30	29
C Block B Wing 4	Mainly remand prisoners	32	31
Te Kaitiaki Wairua	Low medium, low, and minimum security sentenced prisoners – all on Voluntary Segregation	60	59
Te Whare Mahi	Remand prisoners	20	19
	Total	251	220

² In 2019, half the prisoners at Manawatū Prison were on remand. The proportion of remand prisoners is increasing nationwide. Justice Sector Projections 2022-2023 indicate the nationwide remand population will increase from 3,500 in November 2022 to 4,700 by June 2032 — an increase of almost 35%. It is important to note this does not necessarily mean the overall number of prisoners will increase, just that the proportions of remand to sentenced prisoners are likely to change.

³ At 17 April 2023, only two other men's prisons in New Zealand (Mount Eden Corrections Facility and Spring Hill Corrections Facility) were managing a higher proportion of remand prisoners.

22. Of the 75 sentenced prisoners, 32 men (43%) were classified as minimum security. Nineteen men were low medium, 13 were high security, and eight were low security. In addition, two were sentenced but unclassified, and one was recall outstanding.⁴
23. The largest ethnic group was Māori, with 124 men (56%), followed by New Zealand European/Pākehā, with 80 men (36%). Eight men were classed as 'Other', and seven as Pacific peoples. The ethnicity of one man was not recorded.
24. At the time of our inspection, two prisoners were aged 20 years and under, and 10 prisoners were aged 60 years and over.
25. No prisoners identified as transgender at the time of our inspection. Therefore we have removed the inspection standards relating to trans prisoners from this report.

Staff

26. Manawatū Prison was allocated 182 full time equivalent (FTE) staff comprised of:
 - » 142 FTE custodial staff
 - » 11 FTE management and administration staff
 - » 11 FTE case management roles
 - » 9 offender employment roles
 - » 9 health roles.
27. Manawatū Prison, in common with other prisons in New Zealand, has been affected by a nationwide staff shortage that followed the COVID-19 pandemic. Manawatū Prison has 142 FTE custodial positions, but at the time of our inspection was operating with 129 custodial staff, and 13 vacancies. However, 23 of the 129 staff could not be rostered. For example, of the 23, eight were new recruits who were completing the Custodial Officer Development Pathway. Five of the 23 had been voluntarily deployed to other sites where staffing levels were even lower (the practice of redeploying staff is sometimes referred to at Corrections as 'surge support').
28. Due to these custodial staff shortages, Manawatū Prison was operating under a Staffing Level Response Roster based on 80% staffing. Staffing Level Response Rosters are a temporary, medium-term response to ongoing staff shortages. When a site is operating under a Staffing Level Response Roster, site management decide what services they can deliver with 80% of staff, rather than attempting to achieve a standard level of service. However, although the site was working under a Staffing Level Response Roster, we observed that prisoners were experiencing a regime that was delivering above minimum entitlements.
29. The management team, administration team and offender employment team were all fully staffed at the time of our inspection.
30. The case management team had 10 staff, with two additional staff due to start soon. This team included a programme scheduler and a guided release case manager.

⁴ If a prisoner is classified as 'recall outstanding' they have been recalled to prison by the New Zealand Parole Board (for example, because they have breached their parole conditions) and are awaiting the board's decision about whether they must stay in prison or can be released again, perhaps with additional conditions.

The health team had been short staffed (only six of nine nurse positions filled) until shortly before our inspection, when two new nurses started. One nurse position was still vacant at the time of our inspection.

Complaints received and reviewed by the Inspectorate

31. In the six-month review period from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, the Inspectorate received nine information requests and 48 complaints from prisoners at Manawatū Prison. This was the second lowest number of complaints to the Inspectorate across all prisons nationwide. The two most common complaint categories from Manawatū Prison were the complaints process and prisoner property. These are the two most common categories of prisoner complaint to the Inspectorate nationwide. Three of the 48 complaints were health related.
32. In the same period, the Inspectorate was involved in monitoring site investigations of four allegations against staff (IR.07 process)⁵ and one statutory review of the misconduct process.⁶

Office of the Inspectorate – Death in Custody investigations

33. There was one death in custody due to assumed natural causes during this period. There is no further comment in this report about this death. The Inspectorate is investigating it separately.

Previous Office of the Inspectorate Inspection Reports

34. Our last inspection of Manawatū Prison was a follow-up inspection in 2019. At the time we found that Manawatū Prison had made good progress in its response to our previous inspection in 2017, with innovative practice applied by both staff and managers to improve overall staff and prisoner safety. At the time, Manawatū Prison remained a challenging site to manage due to its dated design and the range of prisoner categories on site.

Notable Positive Practice

35. In this section, we highlight some of the positive practice we found at Manawatū Prison. We looked for innovative practices that led to improved outcomes for prisoners and from which other sites may be able to learn. We also found certain areas of practice where staff were doing 'business as usual' but were performing well, or under complex or challenging circumstances. Inspectors found five examples of notable positive practice during our inspection of Manawatū Prison.
36. Leaders on site were generally visible, accessible and consistent. They offered clear communication about priorities, including staff safety. This had a positive impact on staff morale and contributed to a culture in which staff generally interacted with prisoners in a professional and responsive manner. It also enabled stakeholders, such as providers, and staff to work better together to provide improved outcomes for prisoners (see paragraphs 44 to 52).
37. The site had introduced a short course on scaffolding and working at heights which was available to remand and sentenced prisoners and could lead to accreditation. The site had repurposed the gym for this course to make good use of a space that could not be used for

⁵ The Inspectorate is notified of all allegations by prisoners about poor staff behaviour (such as allegations of assault or sexual assault) recorded in an IR.07. The Inspectorate may decide to monitor the prison's process in dealing with these allegations.

⁶ The misconduct process deals with allegations of poor prisoner behaviour. The Inspectorate can only review the timeliness of this process. If a prisoner is not satisfied with the outcome of a misconduct process, it is referred to a Visiting Justice (external judge).

its usual purpose due to short staffing. This was a creative response by the site to make good use of an otherwise under-utilised space and to give remand prisoners an opportunity to be involved in a constructive activity (see paragraphs 56 and 253).

38. Staff in the site's Receiving Office were managing a significant increase in the number of prisoners arriving and leaving. Despite this, the Receiving Office was clean, tidy and well organised. Staff were following the correct processes and ensuring prisoners were held safely and appropriately (see paragraphs 66 to 70).
39. Regular Prison Forums were attended by senior managers and prisoner representatives from all units. These forums gave prisoners a voice and potentially allowed the site to manage some issues before they resulted in complaints (see paragraph 109).
40. We found a noticeable improvement in the general cleanliness, tidiness and good maintenance of most parts of the prison. Since Manawatū Prison is an older site, this was especially encouraging. We noted the opening of a site laundry in a repurposed space, which helped to ensure prisoners had sufficient quantities of good quality clean bedding (see paragraphs 155 to 164).

Inspection

Leadership

Inspection Standards

- Leaders provide direction, and work collaboratively with staff, stakeholders and prisoners, to set and communicate strategic priorities that will improve outcomes for prisoners.
- Leaders create a culture in which staff and other stakeholders willingly engage in activities to improve outcomes for prisoners.
- Leaders provide the necessary resources to enable good outcomes for prisoners.
- Leaders focus on delivering priorities that support good outcomes for prisoners. They closely monitor progress against these priorities.

41. In early 2023, we expanded our Inspection Standards to include a series of standards on leadership. Our inspection of Manawatū Prison was the first in New Zealand to use the expanded standards. In these standards, the term 'leader' refers to any person with leadership or management responsibility in the prison.
42. After our last follow-up inspection in 2019, there were a number of changes in key leaders at Manawatū Prison, including the prison director. These changes took place against a backdrop of significant occurrences including the global COVID-19 pandemic; the introduction by Corrections of a new shift system called Making Shifts Work (later replaced by a temporary Staffing Level Response Roster); changes in the prisoner demographic, particularly an increase in remand prisoners; and an increase in staff turnover, due mainly to retirements, transfers, and the loss of staff to Australian jurisdictions. We were told these occurrences had adversely affected staff morale in the period 2019 – 2022, and that morale had been further impacted by a perceived lack of visibility of the site's then leadership team, and speculation surrounding the future of the site.
43. At the time of our 2023 Inspection, many people we spoke with across the site highlighted the arrival of the current Acting Prison Director in September 2022 as a turning point in improving staff morale and site stability, with her approach described as hands-on, visible and consistent.
44. This view was echoed by representatives of both of the main staff unions on site, with one union representative citing the Acting Prison Director's stronger focus on Hōkai Rangī, and clear communication about Corrections' strategic priorities and staff safety and welfare. One of the union representatives told us staff now felt confident about raising concerns when they had them.
45. The Acting Prison Director had taken action to increase the visibility of those in leadership roles, encouraging the Residential Manager and Principal Corrections Officers to be more present in the units. The Acting Prison Director was also holding her team accountable, and taking the time to explain why certain practices were important.

46. We observed that some senior managers were visible on site. For example, we observed prisoners greeting the Residential Manager (a Tier 5 manager⁷) in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit. It was obvious the prisoners were familiar with him. The Principal Corrections Officer was visible in the same unit and said he generally walked around it twice a day. Men in the unit said they saw both the Residential Manager and the Principal Corrections Officer every day.
47. While the improvement in staff morale following the recent leadership changes was a consistent theme of our conversations across the site, staff highlighted a number of areas as still requiring attention or as work in progress. Some discussed perceptions of favouritism when it came to providing opportunities for secondments and advancement, suggesting these opportunities were only made available to certain staff. These perceptions were acknowledged by the Acting Prison Director who told us she supported and worked to ensure diversity, inclusion and fairness.
48. We were pleased to observe that the improvements in morale described to us by staff were echoed by a range of stakeholders. Most importantly, these improvements appeared to be contributing to a culture in which staff and stakeholders were able to work together to provide better outcomes for prisoners, albeit their progress was impeded by factors such as staff shortages (and the resulting impact this had on programmes and other purposeful activities) and the transient prisoner population. We heard from a range of stakeholders – including the chaplains, volunteers and contractors – that leadership across the site had improved and was strong. We were told consistently that stakeholders had no issues with access to the site, felt safe and were made to feel part of the team.
49. The current operating environment presented many challenges, which meant services to prisoners were either severely restricted or suspended altogether compared with pre-2019 levels. However, we observed that the leadership team was working proactively with staff and stakeholders to provide the best outcomes for prisoners in the circumstances.
50. We observed that many managers and staff were attempting to model the five Hōkai Rangi values⁸ and to manage prisoners in a humanising and healing manner. However, due to low staffing levels, it was difficult for the site to operate in a way that truly reflected the spirit and intent of Hōkai Rangi. For example, there was limited access to cultural activities for Māori prisoners. The Iwi Liaison Officer, who is also the Kaiwhakamana for the site, told us there was a need for better planning to ensure men had whānau support on release, but he was encouraged by the developing relationship with the current leadership team.
51. One group of volunteers we interviewed said they had noticed a significant shift at the site recently. They said it now seemed more rehabilitative and that “the staff seem to want prisoners to do well”. They also said they felt more respected coming on to the site, with more engagement in their interactions from staff, and a “positive vibe” between prisoners and staff.
52. Members of the Community Corrections team we spoke with told us they have a positive relationship with the prison and have found the current prison leadership to be good and solutions focused. However, they were concerned that prisoners were being transferred away from whānau, which did not align to Hōkai Rangi. They also felt there was little strategic oversight regarding interventions and told us Corrections’ current prison population management/remand management policy had left some programme facilitators with no eligible men to deliver programmes to. The Community Corrections team had lost the ability

⁷ Tier 5 managers are senior managers who report to the prison director.

⁸ Rangatira (leadership), manaaki (respect), wairua (spirituality), kaitiaki (guardianship) and whānau (relationships).

- to have face-to-face contact with the men as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, and still had to use AVL suites or telephones. As was reported by some of the custodial staff, members of the Community Corrections team were unclear of the bigger picture for a return to “normal delivery of services” at the site. They wanted to understand and be involved in this.
53. The Health Centre Manager reported a good relationship with custodial staff and was hoping to strengthen training support for nurses. The Health Centre Manager had had a difficult transition to the role due to short staffing, but with a nearly full team of nurses (eight of nine now in the role) at the time of our inspection, was expecting the situation would improve.
 54. One of the psychologists told us on occasion she felt there had been a lack of communication from site leadership about the wider changes across the site and the impact of those changes on the men, and on programme and service providers. One example where she felt communication could have been better was the recent ending of the Whakatutuki Moemoeā rehabilitation programme for young men.
 55. We spoke with members of the leadership team and observed one of the regular Prison Operations Team meetings, which is attended by members of the extended leadership team. It was evident there was a generally well-understood commonality of purpose and priorities, including a focus on monitoring progress against those priorities. Against the backdrop of the current operational challenges, we observed a determination to implement initiatives that would lead to better outcomes for prisoners. These included a range of short initiatives such as a short course on scaffolding and working at heights which the site had made available to both remand and sentenced prisoners and which could lead to accreditation. The site had proactively repurposed the site gym for this course to make good use of a space that could not be used for its usual purpose under the current Staffing Level Response Roster. Other small achievements, such as the restart of the Release to Work (RTW) programme, albeit with just one prisoner at the time of our visit, were seen as something to build on.
 56. We were pleased to observe the strong focus at the Prison Operations Team meeting on safety leadership (including a review of Corrections’ 11 critical health and safety risks), security and risk management. We observed the wider leadership team engaged in quality discussions on a wide range of issues that support staff to stay safe, while delivering positive outcomes for prisoners. These included health and safety ‘First Line of Defence’ checks, the Prison Tension Assessment Tool, goals relating to the site’s Violence and Aggression Reduction plan⁹, and training opportunities.

Findings

- Finding 1. Staff morale was generally good due to visible leadership from the Acting Prison Director and some senior leaders, including principal corrections officers.
- Finding 2. The site was operating at a reduced staffing level and with a high proportion of remand prisoners which meant it was difficult for staff and other stakeholders to prioritise improving outcomes for prisoners.
- Finding 3. Uncertainty over staffing levels and prisoner demographics made it difficult for leaders to give clear messages to staff about how the site would be

⁹ All prisons in New Zealand have site Violence and Aggression Reduction plans as part of Corrections’ wider Violence and Aggression Work Programme.

transitioned to pre-COVID-19 levels of service, including timeframes for achieving this.

Escorts, reception and induction

Escorts and transfers

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners travel in safe, decent conditions and are treated with respect, and attention is paid to their individual needs.
- Prisoners understand why and where they are being transferred to.

57. Most of the remand prisoners we spoke with had been to court in Palmerston North. From court they had been transferred to Whanganui Prison, a journey of around 50 minutes, despite the fact that Manawatū Prison is much closer, with an estimated journey time of around 13 minutes. They had later been transferred back to Manawatū Prison.
58. One of the site's senior managers told us these additional transfers had become necessary to help manage the numbers of prisoners arriving at Manawatū Prison due to the reduced staffing levels. He told us that with the implementation of the Staffing Level Response roster, a decision had been made at a regional level that most prisoners remanded into custody from Palmerston North courts would be sent to Whanganui Prison, which is larger, despite it being further away. He told us this decision had also partly been informed by the fact that Manawatū Prison does not have an Intervention and Support Unit for the safe accommodation of prisoners assessed as being at risk of suicide or self-harm, but Whanganui Prison does. While the two sites appeared to be working well together to manage these transfers, and while we understood the need to do things differently when sites are short-staffed, we note the additional inter-prison transfers would undoubtedly have an impact on prisoners' wellbeing.
59. The same senior manager told us it had also been agreed at a regional level that if a prisoner was sentenced at Palmerston North court, he would be sent temporarily to Manawatū Prison (or taken to Whanganui Prison if Manawatū was full). Limited numbers of sentenced prisoners were accommodated because Manawatū Prison was being operated primarily as a remand prison. This meant newly sentenced men were often only held at Manawatū Prison for a matter of days before being transferred again to another prison where they could serve their sentences. This included prisoners who were from the Manawatū region and whose family/whānau lived locally. Again, while we understood the need to transfer prisoners away from a short-staffed prison with a high remand population, this would undoubtedly have an impact on prisoners' wellbeing.
60. Prisoners at Manawatū Prison had been transferred by road, typically in Prisoner Escort Vehicles (PEVs). PEVs are vans fitted with metal compartments in the back to create individual cells. We inspected the PEV that was generally used for inter-prison transfers between Manawatū and Whanganui prisons. This PEV had four individual compartments in the back; two were accessed from rear doors, and two were accessed from sliding doors on either side of the vehicle. In the centre of the ceiling of each compartment was an air vent for ventilation, a light, and an intercom speaker that escorting staff could use to communicate with prisoners. We were told the engine of the vehicle had to be running for the lighting and ventilation to work. Each compartment also had a camera which was located on the ceiling



above the compartment door for escorting staff to monitor prisoners during their time in the vehicle.

- 61. All prisoners who are travelling in a PEV must be accompanied by an Instructions for Escorts form¹⁰ which contains their personal details and lists any special instructions, risk mitigations and medication, so escorting staff are aware of their needs. During our inspection, Inspectors reviewed this documentation for a number of prisoners and found forms had accompanied them and contained an appropriate level of detail.
- 62. Some of the men we spoke with had comfort and safety concerns about travelling in PEVs, as the metal seating on which they had travelled had no padding, no seatbelts, and there were no emergency exits or intercoms that prisoners could control. There were also no emergency buttons inside the compartments. However, most of the men reported they had been given bottled water for their journey, the air conditioning had been working, and the van had been clean.
- 63. Corrections has specific guidance for how transfers should be conducted, including that prisoners should be given advance warning of the transfer. Most of the men reported good communication around their transfers.

Findings

- Finding 4. Due to reduced staffing levels, many remand prisoners had first been transferred from Palmerston North court to Whanganui Prison and then, later, to Manawatū Prison.
- Finding 5. Due to the high remand population, men from the area were being transferred to other prisons.
- Finding 6. Communication with prisoners about transfers was generally good.
- Finding 7. Most prisoners had experienced decent conditions during transfers, but some had comfort and safety concerns about travelling in PEVs.

Reception and induction

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners are safe and treated with respect on their reception and during their first days in prison. Prisoners’ immediate needs are identified on arrival and staff ensure that individuals’ immediate anxieties are addressed before the end of the first day.
- Prisoners are promptly inducted and supported to understand life in prison and know what will happen to them next.
- Prisoners can access legal advice and, where applicable, a consular representative.

¹⁰ POM M.04.01.Form.01

- Information relating to prison life is accessible for all prisoners.

64. When prisoners arrive at or leave the prison they are processed through the Receiving Office. At Manawatū Prison, the Receiving Office has four holding cells, two dry cells,¹¹ a private room with no camera for strip searching prisoners, and two interview rooms that health staff use to conduct their assessments. There is also an office for file storage and a small property storage area.
65. We observed that the Receiving Office at Manawatū Prison was clean, tidy and well organised. Staff reported that they offered all newly arrived prisoners drinks and food if appropriate, and prisoners could access a toilet.
66. Staff in the Receiving Office told us many prisoners who arrived were in transit to another prison and said the site focus was on being a transit/transfer site. This was supported by the data. For the period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019, Manawatū Prison managed 619 receptions/exits, whereas for the same six-month period in 2022/23 there were 889 receptions/exits, an increase of 270 receptions/exits (44%). Staff told us at busy times there were sometimes not enough holding cells in the Receiving Office, although we observed staff identifying suitable prisoners to mix which enabled them to manage prisoners safely.
67. The prisoners we spoke with confirmed their immediate needs had been met at the Receiving Office. They said staff had strip searched them appropriately and respectfully and that they had no issue with Receiving Office processes. We noted that since most prisoners had been transferred from Whanganui Prison, other immediate needs, such as a free telephone call, would have been managed at Whanganui Prison.
68. Custodial staff in the Receiving Office also processed prisoners' property (if they were staying at the prison) and conducted the reception risk assessment to establish if the prisoner was at risk of suicide or self-harm. We were advised that the prison does not have an Intervention and Support Unit (ISU) and any prisoner assessed as at risk is transferred off site, usually to Whanganui Prison. There is a regional directive that one bed in Whanganui Prison ISU must be kept for at-risk men from Manawatū Prison.
69. At the time of our inspection, we were unable to observe the reception interview process for new arrivals due to a medical emergency. However, we reviewed the documentation for all 12 of the men who were received between 17 and 21 April to confirm that their immediate needs, the reception risk assessment, and a site induction interview had been completed within the specified timeframes. From this review we found the majority of men had been received according to the correct procedures.
70. Unit staff are required to complete a unit induction with every newly arrived prisoner into the unit. Prisoners we spoke with provided mixed accounts of their unit induction experience. Some said they had received a unit induction and were able to make their initial telephone call. However, some other men said they had not received a unit induction. Some of these men said they had learned unit routines and rules from the other men, but this could lead to gaps in knowledge about what was available at the site. For example, some men told us because they hadn't had a unit induction, they did not know how to use the prisoner kiosk¹² which meant their access to information and self-service applications may have been limited.

¹¹ A dry cell does not have a toilet, running water, or a modesty screen. Dry cells are often used in the management of people who are suspected of concealing items (such as drugs) internally.

¹² Kiosks allow prisoners to submit canteen orders, put in meeting requests, and read legislation and prison regulations.

Some men also told us due to the lack of induction they did not know they could request AVL whānau visits.

- 71. Most of the men we spoke with reported they had been given sufficient bedding and clothing on arrival at their unit.

Findings

Finding 8. The Receiving Office was clean and well-organised and men were generally received according to the correct procedures. Staff treated prisoners with respect and met their immediate needs.

Finding 9. During busy times there could be an insufficient number of holding cells in the Receiving Office. However, staff were managing this safely.

Finding 10. Most men received a unit induction, but some others said they had not and had learned unit routines and rules from other men.

Health screening on entry

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners’ immediate physical and mental health needs, including substance use and prescription medication needs are assessed on reception and responded to promptly and effectively.

- 72. A Reception Health Triage is undertaken by nursing staff at the Receiving Office for all new arrivals or people returning to prison. New arrivals are prioritised for any follow-up care based on their immediate health care needs.
- 73. At Manawatū Prison, we observed that health staff completed the Reception Health Triage appropriately in the Receiving Office and arranged medications promptly. Prisoners we interviewed confirmed they had seen a nurse at the Receiving Office and were satisfied with the care they had received there.
- 74. We reviewed the Reception Health Triage documentation for the 12 men who were received between 17 and 21 April 2023. Seven had been transferred to Manawatū Prison from other sites and four were staying overnight on their way to other prisons so these 11 men had not required health triages. Only one was a new arrival to the prison and he had received a health triage which met the required standard. For those men who had been prescribed medication, our review confirmed there was no delay in them accessing this medication.
- 75. Following the Reception Health Triage, we noted health staff were quick to follow up and provide Initial Health Assessments where necessary. For example, one man who had been transferred from another prison was overdue for his Initial Health Assessment; staff at Manawatū Prison completed this within a week of his arrival.

Finding

Finding 11. Health staff completed the Reception Health Triage appropriately and arranged medications and follow-up assessments promptly.

Duty of care

Access to legal advisers and attendance at court hearings

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners have reasonable access to consult with a legal adviser.
- An audio-visual link can be used for eligible court cases and for other legal consultations.¹³

76. Prisoners could access their legal representatives, and generally did so by telephone. However, they had to use the telephones in the staff offices in their units, which meant staff were always present. There was nowhere in the units for men to make legal telephone calls in private. Prisoners in B Block, C Block and Te Whare Mahi units all said they had had to make calls to their lawyers with custodial staff present. This created a risk to prisoners' entitlement to confidentiality and the protection of legal privilege.¹⁴
77. The prison has an audio-visual link (AVL) suite which is situated in the high security area of the prison. The suite contains four AVL booths and two holding cells. We examined the AVL bookings register for the three-month period between 1 January and 31 March 2023 and found no negative comments from prisoners. During that period, 438 AVL sessions took place. Of these sessions, 185 were court hearings and 121 were calls to lawyers. We observed that although the site was operating under a Staffing Level Response roster, they appeared to be managing AVL escorts well by prioritising staff placement for this task. Therefore, custodial staff shortages did not appear to be impacting the men's ability to use the AVL suite.
78. In common with the rest of the prison network at the time of our visit, New Zealand Parole Board (NZPB) hearings were being held via AVL. Relationships with the NZPB were described by site management as good. This was confirmed in subsequent enquiries made with the NZPB Operations Manager, who noted the prison had a good case management team who worked hard to meet the timeframes for Board hearings. Some 'mock' hearings had been held at the prison in preparation for the return of attended hearings, which were expected to start before the end of 2023.
79. The AVL booths were clean and well-ventilated. Intercoms located in the booths enabled prisoners to speak to their lawyer in private. We observed a prisoner attending a court AVL session and he appeared comfortable and able to follow the proceedings.

Findings

Finding 12. Prisoners had reasonable access to consult with a legal adviser, though telephone calls to lawyers had to be made with staff present which was a privacy issue and not in alignment with the protection of legal privilege.

¹³ Note this is an indicator – not a standard.

¹⁴ Corrections Act 2004, Section 74 (3)

Finding 13. The AVL suite was in good order, well supported by staff, and available for eligible court cases and legal consultations.

Bullying and violence reduction

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners feel safe from bullying, abuse and violence.

80. Most of the prisoners we spoke with told us they generally felt safe.
81. Some prisoners had witnessed bullying and standovers,¹⁵ predominantly for food. Staff confirmed that in the past there had been prisoners standing over others for food in Te Whare Mahi unit. Staff told us they had changed the meal distribution system to deal with this. Previously, staff had not checked that men were collecting the meal they had ordered, and had allowed men to collect extra meals on behalf of others. The new system ensured staff checked each man was collecting only the meal he had ordered, and men were no longer allowed to collect extra meals. This resolved the issue.
82. Staff told us the site was impacted by three main gangs (Nomads, Black Power, and Mongrel Mob), but that the situation was mostly settled. However, they acknowledged standovers did occur, predominantly in C Block, Wings 1 and 3. In addition, as prisoners were arriving from across the northern region, members of different gangs (e.g. Killer Beez) were increasingly being received and this may pose an emerging risk for the site.
83. We were told remand prisoners often had an average stay of only two to three days. This high turnover of prisoners passing through was significant as it meant prisoners were often not there long enough to build rapport with staff or each other. This can lead to an increase in tension and assaults.
84. It was pleasing to note Manawatū Prison was holding regular Safer Custody Panel meetings to monitor incidents, risks and trends in relation to the safety of staff and prisoners. We reviewed the minutes for the ten Safer Custody Panels held across the six-month review period. The minutes showed these meetings were well-attended by senior managers and staff from across the prison, and addressed a range of safety issues.
85. As mentioned earlier, all prisons in New Zealand have Violence and Aggression Reduction plans as part of Corrections' wider Violence and Aggression Reduction Work Programme. These plans are intended to develop, align, and sequence work between Corrections and staff unions to reduce the impacts of prisoner violence and aggression on custodial staff. At Manawatū Prison the Acting Prison Director and union representatives told us their plan was in place and was regularly reviewed at management and Prison Operations Team meetings. They told us there had been an increased focus on staff wellbeing. We reviewed the plan and confirmed it was current and under regular review. The last review had been in April 2023 and the next scheduled review was June 2023. The plan was linked with the site's risk profile. We note the meeting minutes from the 9 March 2023 Safer Custody Panel set out that

¹⁵ Using intimidation or threats to force others into compliance.

Reducing Violence and Aggression capability uplift training¹⁶ had begun and that all staff would be attending this over the next couple of months.

86. The Prison Tension Assessment Tool (PTAT) helps custodial staff assess the overall level of tension in a prison unit, which in turn can help them manage the risk of violence. PTAT assessments deliver a tension level of red, amber or green. Assessments should be completed after unit lock-up, but may be done more often. In the six-month review period from 1 October 2022 to 31 March, staff at Manawatū Prison generally completed PTAT assessments as required; there were only a small number of occasions when they were not completed for all units. The PTATs for Manawatū Prison were mostly green, except on three occasions when they were amber in two units in C Block. There were no red PTATs over the reporting period. This indicates low levels of reported tension across the prison.
87. In the six-month review period from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, there were 15 incidents of prisoner on prisoner physical assault. None of these incidents were assessed as requiring immediate notification to the incident line, which indicates they were non-serious assaults.
88. In the same period there were 15 incidents of prisoner on staff assault. Ten were recorded as 'assault no injury'. The remaining five were assessed as requiring immediate notification to the incident line due to their nature or severity. One of the five was recorded as a serious incident and one as sexual assault in line with the Corrections Incident recording definitions.
89. It was pleasing to note that at the time of our inspection there were no prisoners sharing cells at Manawatū Prison. While we acknowledge cell sharing can be a protective factor against suicide for some men, being housed in a single cell gave men some additional privacy.

Findings

Finding 14. Prisoners generally felt safe from bullying and intimidation.

Finding 15. Staff acknowledged that some intimidation did occur and demonstrated a good understanding of how to deal with such issues.

Finding 16. Safer Custody Panel meetings were held regularly, well documented, and well attended by appropriate staff and senior managers.

Finding 17. The prison's Violence and Aggression Reduction plan was current and under regular review.

Prisoner files

Inspection Standards

- A prisoner file management system is in place and used to record all information about that prisoner and confidentiality is maintained.

¹⁶ This is nationwide training that focuses on giving custodial staff a deeper understanding of tactical communications.

90. Prisoner files contain personal information about individual prisoners throughout their time in prison. These files are hard copy (paper). Electronic files for individual prisoners are also held in the Integrated Offender Management System (IOMS).
91. At Manawatū Prison, Receiving Office staff told us paper-based prisoner files were appropriately stored in lockable, fireproof filing cabinets in three different locations. Filing in the Receiving Office was done by Receiving Office staff. During our inspection we observed that the paper files appeared to be in good order. There was no evidence of outstanding filing.
92. We reviewed a sample of paper and electronic files and found they were comprehensive and up to date, with input from all staff working with prisoners (including custodial and case management staff).

Finding

Finding 18. The prisoner file management system was in good order and paper-based files were stored in secure locations.

Separation of prisoner categories

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners of different categories are separated, where possible, by allocating them to separate parts of the prison.

93. Prisoners of different categories present different levels of risk to the safety and security of the prison and must therefore be managed in a unit and regime that is consistent with their category, and not mixed together.¹⁷ For remand prisoners, there are two categories: remand accused and remand convicted. Sentenced prisoners are categorised by security classification: minimum, low, low medium, high or maximum. Prisoners of different categories should generally not be mixed, though a prison director may apply to a regional commissioner for an exemption to mix prisoners. Exemptions to mix are generally for the purposes of rehabilitation, education and employment, or to enable sites to ensure prisoners received minimal entitlements such as time out of their cells.
94. At the time of our inspection, the site had an exemption to mix remand accused and remand convicted prisoners in B and C Blocks which had been appropriately approved by the Regional Commissioner in July 2022. The exemption was allowed until the units revert back to their original purpose (i.e. housing high security sentenced prisoners) and staffing levels return to normal. A member of the prison management team told us the exemption was regularly reviewed by the management team at their weekly meetings. There were no prisoners in these units who had requested not to mix.

¹⁷ Corrections Regulations 2005, Regulation 86 relates to keeping remand accused prisoners apart from other prisoners. Regulation 52c relates to the prisoner placement system and its purpose to provide a regime for the management of sentenced prisoners that is consistent with the prisoner's security classification.

95. Remand accused and remand convicted prisoners were being mixed in B Block with no issues. The site was not mixing these categories of prisoners in C Block, although they could have done if they wished.
96. We observed that in Te Whare Mahi unit, remand accused and remand convicted prisoners were also being mixed. This was not included in the exemption and the Inspection team raised this with the site.
97. In Te Kaitiaki Wairua Unit, sentenced prisoners of different security classifications were mixed. All the prisoners in this unit were on Voluntary Segregation. Prisoners we interviewed reported no issues.

Findings

Finding 19. Prisoners of different categories were either kept apart or managed well together, including those managed in accordance with the approved exemption to mix.

Finding 20. The prison was mixing remand accused with other categories of prisoners in Te Whare Mahi unit, but was unable to provide an exemption to mix for this unit.

Accommodation

Inspection Standards

- The placement of prisoners in shared cells is done after careful consideration of their suitability for associating with one another.

98. Corrections staff use the Shared Accommodation Cell Risk Assessment (SACRA) to review the compatibility of prisoners before they are placed in a shared cell.¹⁸ The tool does not replace staff judgement, but helps to inform their decision-making and minimise any potential risk.
99. It was pleasing to note that at the time of our inspection there were no prisoners sharing cells at Manawatū Prison. This gave men some additional privacy. We noted there was only one unit (B Block) where double bunking would have been possible. A COBRA¹⁹ check confirmed the maximum number of men allowed in this unit had been lowered in June 2021 to formally cease the use of double bunking.

Finding

Finding 21. There were no prisoners sharing a cell at the time of our inspection.

Complaints

¹⁸ Corrections Regulations 2005, Regulation 66 allows for prisoners to share cells unless they are deemed unsuited to sharing.

¹⁹ Corrections Business Reporting & Analysis (COBRA)

Inspection Standards

- Complaints procedures are effective, timely and well understood.
- Staff and prisoners are encouraged to resolve complaints at the lowest level in the first instance; when this is not possible prisoners understand how to make a complaint, and are able to do so easily.
- Prisoners feel safe from repercussions when using complaints procedures and can appeal decisions easily.
- Where a prisoner raises a concern about their safety, these matters are prioritised.

100. Corrections expects prisoners' complaints to be resolved at the lowest and most informal level possible. If prisoners wish to make a formal complaint to Corrections, they should be able to make one electronically via a prisoner kiosk, or by completing a paper form. Prisoners should also be able to access telephones or writing materials to make complaints to external oversight agencies such as the Office of the Inspectorate, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Health and Disability Commissioner, or the Human Rights Commission.
101. In the six months from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, 237 PC.01 complaints were recorded at the site. The largest number of complaints were categorised as property (49 complaints), other (40 complaints) and communication (19 complaints).
102. In the six-month review period from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, the Inspectorate received nine information requests and 48 complaints from prisoners at Manawatū Prison. This was the second lowest number of complaints to the Inspectorate across all prisons nationwide. The two most common complaint categories from Manawatū Prison were the complaints process and prisoner property. These are the two most common categories of prisoner complaint to the Inspectorate nationwide. Three of the 48 complaints were health related.
103. In the same period, the Inspectorate was involved in four reviews of allegations against staff (IR.07 process)²⁰ and one statutory review of the misconduct process.²¹
104. All of the prisoners we interviewed said they knew how to make a complaint. Two prisoners said they would go to staff first if they had any issues.
105. One prisoner had made ten complaints and said being able to make a complaint on the kiosks had made the process better.
106. Six prisoners attended a prisoner focus group arranged by the Inspection Team in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit. At this focus group, we were told it was easy to make calls to the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Inspectorate and the Health and Disability Commissioner. However, we noted posters showing the telephone numbers to contact these external oversight agencies were not visible in all units.
107. It is worth noting that Manawatū Prison, along with some other New Zealand prisons, holds regular Prison Forums (known as 'prisoner welfare groups' at Manawatū Prison). We were

²⁰ The Inspectorate is notified of all allegations by prisoners about poor staff behaviour, recorded in an IR.07. The Inspectorate may decide to monitor the prison's process in dealing with these allegations.

²¹ The misconduct process deals with allegations of poor prisoner behaviour. The Inspectorate can only review the timeliness of this process. If a prisoner is unhappy with the outcome of a misconduct process, it is referred to a Visiting Justice (external judge).



told these forums were a recent initiative that began after the Acting Prison Director started at the prison in September 2022. The forums are held approximately every four to six weeks and are attended by prisoner representatives from each of the wings, the Acting Prison Director and senior managers (several forums must be held as the prisoner representatives are from different prisoner categories and are therefore not allowed to mix). These forums aimed to give the men an opportunity to speak directly with senior managers, to raise any issues and make suggestions. Manawatū Prison kept minutes of these forums, which enabled them to record and track agreed actions. The Inspection Team commends the use of these forums as a way to give prisoners a voice and, potentially, to allow the site to manage some issues before they result in complaints.

Findings

Finding 22. Prisoners generally understood the complaints process and the system appeared to be working well. However, telephone numbers for external oversight agencies were not displayed in all units.

Finding 23. Regular Prison Forums were being held; these were attended by prisoner representatives and senior managers.

Māori Prisoners

Inspection Standards

- Māori prisoners can access and practise their Māori culture and customs.
- Māori prisoners have access to kaupapa Māori informed and tikanga-based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that are specifically designed to meet their needs.
- Māori prisoners receive help to access stable whānau support.

108. At the time of our inspection, 125 men (57%) identified as Māori. These men identified with around 40 different iwi. The iwi with the most men identifying were Ngāpuhi (Te Tai Tokerau/Northland), Ngāti Raukawa (Horowhenua/Manawatū), Ngāti Porou (East Coast area, north of Gisborne to Tikirau) and Tūhoe (Te Urewera).
109. Opportunities for prisoners to practise Māori culture were limited at Manawatū Prison. When we last visited the prison in 2019, we observed units sometimes held cultural days, and there was a staff member employed as a Māori mentor. At our 2023 Inspection, this staff member was no longer working at the prison. We note the limited cultural opportunities available may be in part due to external providers being unable to return to the site due to reduced custodial staffing levels. Allowing external providers back into the site was something the site was trying to focus on.
110. One prisoner in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit told us prisoners in that unit could learn te reo Māori and kapa haka from another prisoner. Another prisoner from the same unit confirmed there was a kapa haka group that practised nearly every day and anyone could join. We note when the prisoner who is teaching the others is released, these activities are likely to cease. In this unit we observed Māori carvings and paintings on the walls. Two prisoners in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit knew of Corrections’ Hōkai Rangi strategy but were not aware of any initiatives

- relating to it. One of these prisoners told us he had not seen kaiwhakamana²² or mana whenua visiting the unit.
111. There was a carving workshop which was attached to Te Kaitiaki Wairua Unit. We were advised one man was making use of it at the time of our visit. When we last visited the prison in 2019, we observed there was a carving programme available to prisoners in Te Whare Mahi and C Block. However, this was no longer available to these prisoners.
112. One prisoner in Block B had received support from his iwi who were local to the prison.
113. All the men interviewed in C Block and Te Whare Mahi unit expressed their frustration at the lack of cultural activities. One man in C Block told us cultural activities were “non-existent” and said more were needed to “support change in behaviour for the men”. The Acting Principal Corrections Officer for the unit told us that pre-COVID-19, prisoners had organised a kapa haka group and had performed for the staff and other men. The group had been “rewarding” and they wanted to get this going again, but needed a suitable place to practise and perform so were waiting for guidance from the Acting Prison Director.
114. We note the Prison Operations Team (i.e. the site’s leadership team) meeting minutes from 20 April 2023 indicated the site had been scheduling the Department’s cultural capability uplift training package for staff, E Toru Nga Mea,²³ since March 2023, but the training had been postponed a number of times due to absences and clashes. The Acting Prison Director has since confirmed that the Prison Operations Team started E Toru Nga Mea in May 2023 and have now completed it. In addition, it was scheduled to start for the rest of the site staff in September 2023.

Finding

Finding 24. There were limited opportunities for men to take part in Māori cultural activities.

Foreign national prisoners

Inspection Standards

- The specific needs of foreign national prisoners are met, including practical help so they can keep in touch with their families overseas.
- There are prison staff with the skills to communicate with all prisoners on site. Where required, interpreters are provided.

115. Foreign national prisoners (non-New Zealand citizens)²⁴ should expect to be supported in prison to access their consular representative, if required, and to use a translation service if

²² Kaiwhakamana are kaumātua (Māori elders or people of status) who have access to prisons to enable the wellness and well-being of their people. They are not employees of Corrections.

²³ The Corrections intranet describes E Toru Ngā Mea as a foundational programme designed to empower staff with an understanding of a te ao Māori worldview and mātauranga Māori practices.

²⁴ Corrections Regulations 2005, Regulation 87 (3) sets out that a foreign national prisoner is one who is not a New Zealand citizen.

they need support to understand key information. Foreign national prisoners should also have their health, culture, religion, and dietary requirements met.

116. At the time of our inspection, there were two foreign nationals recorded at Manawatū Prison, one from Somalia and one from Australia.

Property

Inspection Standards

- Prisoner's property held in storage is secure, and prisoners can access it on reasonable request.
- Prisoner funds are managed securely and are accounted for.

117. When people enter prison, their personal property is checked, recorded and either given back to them, stored or disposed of.²⁵ If a prisoner has cash with them it will be deposited into their prisoner trust account.²⁶ Prisoners may ask family/whānau to send them authorised personal items (such as additional underwear or pyjamas), which is sorted, checked and registered on individual prisoner property lists by property staff.
118. At Manawatū Prison, property was held in a secure room, with only Receiving Office staff having access. We observed that the property area was clean and well-organised. The Principal Corrections Officer in the Receiving Office told us the property office workload was "heavy". As previously noted in the Reception section of this report, the site is managing a 44% increase²⁷ in receptions/exits so this is doubtless having an impact on workload in the property office.
119. Most prisoners we interviewed had no issues with property. However, as previously noted, in the six months from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, the largest number of PC.01 complaints (i.e. 49 complaints) were in the property category. This was consistent with other prisons, where property was generally the most common category of complaint. At Manawatū Prison, the 49 complaints included 13 claims for lost property, and nine complaints where prisoners were still waiting for property they had requested.
120. Prisoners we interviewed raised no issues about the management of their trust accounts.

Findings

Finding 25. Property was held securely, and prisoners reported that they could generally access their property within reasonable timeframes. However, the largest number of complaints were in the property category.

²⁵ Department of Corrections Authorised Property Rules (2020) guide what prisoners may keep on arrival, in storage, or what needs to be disposed of. Property rules are authorised by the Corrections Act 2004, Section 45A.

²⁶ Prisoner trust accounts are managed by Corrections to enable prisoners to receive money, which they usually spend at the prison canteen. Prisoners may be able to earn money by working in prison industries, or their family/whānau may deposit money into their trust account.

²⁷ Increase calculated on the six-month period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 compared to the review period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Finding 26. Prisoners raised no issues regarding their trust accounts.

Health

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners have timely access to community-equivalent health and dental services, and receive treatment which is sensitive to their diverse needs from competent staff in an environment that promotes dignity and maintains privacy.
- Prisoners are supported and encouraged to optimise their health and well-being.
- Prisons have a health-care service which ensures professional care of the physical and mental health of prisoners.
- Health files are accurate, up-to-date and confidential, and accompany the prisoner when they are transferred.
- Prisoners have access to specialised external secondary and tertiary health care services when required.
- On reception, prisoners are made aware of the prison health services available and how to access them.
- Prisoners have a right to health confidentiality and do not have to provide information, undergo health interventions or screening.

Provision of health care

121. Prisoners are entitled to receive medical treatment that is reasonably necessary, and the standard of health care must be reasonably equivalent to that available to the public.²⁸ Prison health services are nurse-led, supported by contracted providers including a medical officer (general practitioner), physiotherapist, dentist and mental health providers.
122. We received positive feedback from most of the men we interviewed about health care services at the site. The men reported that health staff were helpful, responsive and professional and saw to urgent needs promptly. Some of the men said there could be delays in seeing the medical officer for non-urgent issues.
123. The Clinical Inspector reviewed a sample of 43 prisoner health files from across the six-month review period. These showed most initial health assessments had been completed within the expected timeframe, and there was evidence of some thorough and well-documented assessments.
124. Health staff collected health request forms daily and triaged them immediately. Requests for urgent appointments were responded to on the day or the next day. Non-urgent appointments were placed on the nurse clinic wait list and these men were seen as soon as possible, generally within two to three weeks.
125. The health services team reported that custodial support was good when it was available, and we observed custodial staff providing good support during a medication round. However, we were told that frequently there was only one custodial officer available to assist with moving prisoners to clinics, when there should have been two. This made all the clinics

²⁸ Corrections Act 2004, Section 75.

- slow at times and meant the Medical Officer had to work longer hours to see everybody on his list.
126. The Health Centre Manager noted recent challenges with staff changes, short staffing and orienting new staff. These challenges also meant it had been difficult for health staff to get to training. However, staffing had recently increased (to eight out of nine nurses), and the team was starting to settle in. Nurses had clinical supervision once a month as a group.
127. The Medical Officer had a clinic on site every Tuesday 8.30am – 2pm, though he often stayed longer. He said he felt safe and enjoyed working at the site. He noted he had some challenges with medication charts from other prisons being inaccurate or information not being documented in the health file. He did not have access to the local Te Whatu Ora system to check what medications had been prescribed, or to check laboratory results or other information from the hospital. The clinical inspector reviewed the medical officer clinic list and confirmed all appointments had been triaged and prioritised, with an average wait time for a non-urgent appointment of one to two weeks. All urgent appointments were prioritised and seen as quickly as possible. Access to specialist services was through outpatient services at Palmerston North Hospital or referral to Wellington Hospital for some specialities.
128. One prisoner interviewed stated: "if you want to see a doctor, you fill out a chit and put it in the drop box and will get a response the next day or the day after". Another prisoner confirmed this timeframe, saying if he wanted to see a doctor, he had to wait for one or two days.
129. The dentist was a new contractor at the time of our inspection, with the site not having had a dentist for several months. The dental clinic ran every Thursday, 8.30am – 12pm. The dentist reported they felt safe, had no issues accessing patients and that any requests for additional equipment were met promptly. The dentist advised they had been able to catch up on some outstanding appointments, and that the wait list was sitting at about three weeks at the time of our inspection.
130. At the time of our inspection there was no contracted physiotherapist for Manawatū Prison, even though the procurement process had been underway for several months. Men with urgent physiotherapy needs were sent to Palmerston North Hospital. We were told a podiatrist held a clinic once every two to three weeks as required.
131. We observed that prisoners' medication charts were well-maintained and were reviewed regularly by the medical officer. File notes made in the electronic health record (Medtech) by the nursing staff were of variable quality. Most staff used the basic SOAP documentation tool rather than the more comprehensive SOAPIE.²⁹
132. The Health Centre was clean and tidy. Equipment was all in good order and had been recently calibrated or checked. The team had nearly completed the Cornerstone accreditation programme.³⁰

Findings

²⁹ SOAPIE is a documentation method employed by health care providers for recording patient's clinical notes. There are six parts of a SOAPIE note: Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan, Intervention and Evaluate.

³⁰ Cornerstone is a quality improvement and quality assurance process which allows a practice to measure itself against a defined set of standards titled Aiming for Excellence – standard for New Zealand general practice.

Finding 27. Prisoners' health needs were generally being met, though prisoners with non-urgent needs sometimes had to wait to see a nurse or the medical officer.

Finding 28. Custodial staff provided good support when they were available, but due to staff shortages there were often not enough custodial staff available to assist with movements to all health clinics. This meant wait times were longer and the medical officer had to work longer hours to see everyone on his list.

Finding 29. Prisoners generally had access to specialised external secondary and tertiary health care services when required.

Finding 30. Medication charts were well-maintained and regularly reviewed by the Medical Officer.

Substance abuse

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners with a history of substance abuse receive specialised and individualised treatment and culturally appropriate support (including aftercare).

133. Prisoners should be assessed for alcohol and other drug (AOD) dependency by health staff or case managers using the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST), which helps staff to determine a person's level of risk for substance use and whether AOD interventions would be appropriate.
134. At Manawatū Prison we did not observe any ASSISTS being conducted during our inspection. Of the 12 newly arrived prisoners whose health paperwork we reviewed, eight had had an ASSIST completed, mainly by probation officers in 2023. Three men had ASSISTS completed by probation officers or other staff prior to 2022. Health staff from Manawatū Prison had completed an ASSIST for one man in 2021. Health staff told us they do not usually complete ASSISTS as this was usually done by case managers.
135. In the six-month review period, the site conducted 26 random drug tests, with six positive results.
136. We were told by the Assistant Prison Director that a provider (Salvation Army) had delivered two alcohol and drug courses over the previous six months. COBRA figures confirmed that in the six-month review period, 13 men had completed an eight-week Intensive AOD Treatment Programme, and nine men completed an AOD intensive maintenance programme. No remand prisoners had been able to attend, although the site and provider were planning on delivering a two-week alcohol and drug course which would be available to men on remand.
137. Of the 43 health files we reviewed, we found limited evidence of substance withdrawal assessments being conducted by nurses. The Health Centre Manager noted the lack of training available for health staff. We also noted there was limited support available for men with alcohol or other drug dependency.
138. We heard there could be issues with medication misuse (also known as drug diversion), and there had been a number of recent incident reports about this at Manawatū Prison. During our inspection, one prisoner noted that medication was commonly passed around the unit, and in another prisoner's health file we found a note that made it clear he had access to

methylphenidates³¹ of various forms in prison. We note that in the six-month review period, drugs and drugs paraphernalia accounted for 46 contraband incidents.

139. The site had good support from the local Community Alcohol and Drug Service (CADS) but had experienced difficulties with transferred patients and ensuring accurate prescribing information was shared between different regional CADS teams.

Findings

Finding 31. All prisoner files we reviewed showed evidence that an Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) had been completed.

Finding 32. There was limited support available for prisoners with a history of substance abuse. In particular, there had been no support available for remand prisoners.

Finding 33. There were some issues with drug diversion at the site and further monitoring was required.

Mental health care

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners with mental health needs are identified promptly and supported by community-equivalent services to optimise their well-being during their time in prison and on release.
- Prisoners at risk are appropriately located in a therapeutic environment and supported by trained staff who are resourced to meet their individual needs.

140. Prisoners could access mental health care through the nurse-led health service. However, two of the prisoners we spoke with raised that there was limited support for managing mental health issues, and one said some men found it "hard to cope".
141. An Improving Mental Health clinician was available to support prisoners with mild to moderate mental health needs. At the time of our inspection, there was a two-to-three-month waitlist for this clinician. The clinician told us limited interview space was an issue as they had to compete with case managers and the Clinical Nurse Specialist (Mental Health) for space during limited unlock hours. This was an issue especially in C Block. The Improving Mental Health clinician had been running a therapy group but had to stop as the room location was unsuitable. They were keen to restart this group.
142. A Clinical Nurse Specialist (Mental Health) had been appointed approximately two months before our inspection. The Clinical Inspector's review of 43 health files from across the six-month review period showed that prior to the Clinical Nurse Specialist (Mental Health) starting, not all requests for mental health assistance had been followed up by a mental health clinician due to the limited support available at the time. The appointment of the Clinical Nurse Specialist (Mental Health) was reducing wait times for mental health support.

³¹ Methylphenidates are a central nervous system stimulant used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

143. The Clinical Nurse Specialist (Mental Health) told us their biggest issue was finding suitable interview space. We observed good teamwork between health staff and this clinician, with nurses immediately involving them when a patient was identified as mentally unwell.
144. Staff told us the prison had good support from the local forensic mental health team. The forensic team came on site one day a week to see prisoners, and then followed-up with a multi-disciplinary team meeting later in the week so they could discuss prisoners with high or complex needs with staff.
145. As noted earlier, Manawatū Prison has no Intervention and Support Unit (ISU), which is where prisoners assessed as being at risk of suicide or self-harm would usually be placed. Instead, the prison had three 'safe' or observation cells in B Block (Cells 14 – 16), where at-risk prisoners could be placed before transfer to a site with an ISU (usually Whanganui Prison). These cells were basic and had CCTV cameras installed, and the Ombudsman recommended in his 2022 report³² that they only be used for the shortest possible periods of time. At the time of our inspection, we were pleased to learn from the Principal Corrections Officer that these safe cells had not been used to house at-risk prisoners since June 2022. A check of COBRA records confirmed this. The Principal Corrections Officer told us if a prisoner was assessed as at-risk, the site would arrange a special escort in consultation with health staff to transfer the prisoner to Whanganui Prison's ISU.
146. The Health Centre Manager told us there were sometimes challenges with completing at-risk assessments and that health staff had to call her for confirmation of referrals to Whanganui Prison. Moreover, due to the limited numbers of custodial staff available, there were sometimes difficulties in arranging transfers for at-risk prisoners. Work was ongoing with Whanganui Prison to streamline the process.
147. The Health Centre Manager also told us she was working with the Corrections Principal Adviser Mental Health and Addictions to upskill nurses on conducting mental health assessments to improve the assessment and management of at-risk prisoners. Improved assessments will hopefully reduce the difficulties associated with the transfers of at-risk prisoners.

Findings

- Finding 34. Prisoners could access an Improving Mental Health clinician, though there was a two-to-three-month waitlist to see this clinician. A new Clinical Nurse Specialist (Mental Health) had been appointed recently and this was reducing waitlist times. Both clinicians struggled to find suitable interview and group therapy rooms.
- Finding 35. The site was well-supported by the local forensic mental health team.
- Finding 36. The site does not have an Intervention and Support Unit and the assessment and transfer of prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm was sometimes challenging. The Health Centre Manager was working to improve these areas of practice.

³² Boshier, P. (2022) Report on an unannounced targeted inspection of Manawatū Prison under the Crimes of Torture Act 1989, Office of the Ombudsman

Finding 37. The site's safe cells had not been used since June 2022 as at-risk prisoners were being transferred to the Intervention and Support Unit at Whanganui Prison.

Prisoners with disabilities

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners with physical, mental or other disabilities have full and effective access to prison life on an equitable basis.³³
- Prisoners with a disability or age-related needs are placed in a cell that is suitable and appropriate for their health-related needs.³⁴

148. Corrections does not keep a central register of people with disabilities in prison. Rather, this information is recorded in prisoners' health records, which can only be accessed by health staff.
149. At the time of our inspection, health staff told us there was one older man who used a walking frame due to mobility issues. A review of his health file showed regular interactions with health. Staff told us custodial staff watched out for him and other men in the unit helped him if he needed it.
150. Health staff told us two other men had been using wheelchairs to assist their mobility while recovering from surgery. Health staff reported that custodial staff were generally responsive to health advice notifications and gave support to older prisoners and those with disabilities as required.
151. Older prisoners (65+) are supposed to receive a comprehensive annual health review. However, we could not find evidence these were occurring regularly. At the time of our inspection there were two prisoners who were aged 65 or older. Neither of the two had had their 65+ annual health review, though one had had an Initial Health Assessment the previous year.

Findings

Finding 38. Prisoners with disabilities or special needs appeared to be managed appropriately.

Finding 39. Annual health reviews for older prisoners were not occurring regularly.

³³ Note, this is a basic principle – not a standard.

³⁴ Note this is an indicator – not a standard.

Environment

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners live in a clean and suitable environment which is in a good state of repair and fit for purpose.
- Prisoners have sufficient bedding that is laundered regularly.

Residential units

152. Manawatū has four residential units: B Block, C Block, Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit, and Te Whare Mahi unit. All were in use at the time of our inspection.
153. We observed there was a site laundry at Manawatū Prison. It was in a space that had been repurposed since our last visit, with new washing machines and driers put in during the COVID-19 pandemic so the site no longer had to send its laundry to Whanganui Prison. Some units also had their own unit laundry or washing machine. The Principal Instructor at the site laundry noted the site had considerable stocks of bedding and we observed this was the case. This enabled bedding to be sent promptly to units when needed.
154. B Block was clean, tidy, and freshly painted, including yards and internal common areas, such as the unit gym. This was a significant improvement from previous inspections. There were four large and two small yards in B Block. All yards were in good order. All four large yards had a telephone and bench seating which was under cover from the weather. All large yards also had a stainless-steel toilet with a privacy screen. The Principal Corrections Officer said if anything needs fixing, the contractor (Downer) attended to it promptly.
155. However, we observed that B Block had little natural light and was lacking in ventilation. The physical layout also created line of sight safety issues, and, in general terms, led to ongoing challenges for custodial operations and would not have been conducive to the health and wellbeing of prisoners. We acknowledge the Ombudsman has made repeated recommendations³⁵ that Corrections prioritises the decommissioning of B Block, and replaces it with a modern, fit for purpose building.
156. The kit locker in B Block contained clean, good quality bedding ready to be issued. If prisoners wanted a change of bedding, they could request one.
157. C Block corridors were clean and tidy. The cells we looked at were clean but there was graffiti on the walls and desks and the men we spoke with all said their cells needed painting. The toilets in all but one cell had lids that could be closed which was positive as prisoners eat their meals in their cells. The C Block yards were clean but with extensive graffiti. One yard had a broken telephone, and staff and prisoners told us this had been reported and would be fixed.
158. The kit locker in C Block contained clean, good quality bedding ready to be issued. The unit had its own laundry.
159. Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit was clean and in good order. The men we spoke with did not express any concerns about the cells or the unit. Men in Te Kaitiaki Wairua were able to access a communal dining area to eat their meals together if they chose.

³⁵ For example, in his 2017 and 2022 inspection reports of Manawatū Prison under the Crimes of Torture Act 1989.

160. Te Whare Mahi unit was clean and tidy. Staff and men in the unit both told us some previous occupants had “smashed up” the unit in protest at being moved out of it. Staff had overseen some repairs, but issues remained, including a broken mirror in a cell, a broken shelf in a cell, and different coloured paint showing where shelves had been broken away from the wall. Te Whare Mahi had a communal area that contained kitchen appliances, and a compound where there was a picnic table for men to eat meals together if they chose.
161. There was only one electrical outlet in each cell in Te Kaitiaki Wairua and Te Whare Mahi units, which meant the men were only able to use a single electrical item (e.g. television, radio, fan or jug) at a time. This could be frustrating, though the men acknowledged the electrical circuit at the unit could not handle multiple appliances without fuses constantly blowing.
162. None of the men in Te Whare Mahi unit had any issues getting sufficient clean bedding.

Separates cells

163. Cells 1 – 3 in B Block were previously used as separates cells³⁶ and still had cameras in them. In his 2022 report, the Ombudsman had recommended these cells be decommissioned as they were not fit for purpose. At the time of our inspection we observed this area was now used for storage and were pleased to learn from the Principal Corrections Officer that the separates cells had not been used since 2019 as they were deemed not fit for purpose. COBRA records confirmed this was the case. The Principal Corrections Officer told us prisoners now serve cell confinement³⁷ penalties in their own cells.

Findings

- Finding 40. All residential units were clean and had communal areas where men could associate if they wished.
- Finding 41. Despite general cleanliness and maintenance improvements in B Block, the physical layout continued to create ongoing challenges for safe custodial operations and was not conducive to the health and wellbeing of prisoners.
- Finding 42. Some cells in C Block and Te Whare Mahi unit required painting and some cells in Te Whare Mahi needed repairs. Yards in C Block also required painting and one of the yard telephones needed repair.
- Finding 43. Prisoners had access to sufficient quantities of clean bedding.
- Finding 44. The site’s separates cells had not been used since 2019 and prisoners now serve cell confinement penalties in their own cells.

Hygiene

Inspection Standards

³⁶ Prison management can separate a prisoner from others because they pose a threat to the safety of others or the good order of the prison

³⁷ If they have been found guilty of a misconduct, a prisoner may be confined to their cell as a punishment for 23 hours a day for a set number of days as decided by a hearing adjudicator or visiting justice. The prisoner is allowed out of the cell for an hour a day to shower and exercise, but cannot mix with any other prisoners.

- Prisoners are encouraged to keep themselves clean and are provided with the appropriate toiletries.

164. The prisoners we interviewed in B Block, C Block and Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit all said they had good access to showers. They said there was a good supply of free toiletries and showers were clean and tidy. We observed that the shower cubicles in C Block needed to be painted.
165. Te Whare Mahi unit has two showers that were clean. The men we interviewed said the water cylinder for the unit was very small and they regularly ran out of hot water for showers. All agreed there was good access to free toiletries.
166. The site had a current Hygiene and Sanitation plan which was last updated in May 2022.

Finding

Finding 45. Prisoners had good access to showers and toiletries, although showers in Te Whare Mahi unit often had insufficient hot water.

Clothing

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners have adequate access to a variety of clean clothing, including underwear and footwear, which is seasonally appropriate and of the right size and quality.

167. In B Block, we observed a good stock of clothing of various sizes ready to issue from the kit locker. However, one prisoner told us some of the clothing he had been issued was too big, and some prisoners said they hand wash their own personal clothing in their cells because items went missing.
168. In C Block, some men we interviewed reported issues with accessing appropriately fitting clothing. One man said when he arrived, he had to wear what the unit could provide, which was mainly too big for him.
169. The men we interviewed in Te Kaitiaki Wairua and Te Whare Mahi units reported no issues with access to clean, appropriately sized clothing.

Findings

Finding 46. Men in B Block and C Block could not always access appropriately sized clothing.

Finding 47. Men in Te Kaitiaki Wairua and Te Whare Mahi units had access to clean, appropriately sized clothing.

Food

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners have a varied, healthy and balanced diet which meets their individual needs.
- Upon request, the prison provides meals and food in line with religious, cultural and other special dietary requirements.
- Prisoners' food and meals are stored, prepared and served in line with hygiene regulations.
- Clean drinking water shall be available to every prisoner.
- Mealtimes are reasonable and generally match those in the community, where possible.

170. Prisoners are generally served the same menu across all Corrections' prisons, with standard and vegetarian options available. Prisoners with specific health or religious needs are also catered for.
171. At Manawatū Prison, meals are prepared in the prison kitchen. Food was typically cereal, toast and a hot drink for breakfast, sandwiches and fruit for lunch, and a hot meal for dinner. The men we interviewed said the food quality and portion sizes were very good.
172. The prison kitchen was tidy and hygienic, with prisoners working under the supervision of instructors. Meals were temperature tested where appropriate and weighed to ensure portion sizes were standard.
173. All the men we interviewed had access to clean drinking water.
174. The timing of meals was generally reasonable, though some men received their evening meal rather early at 4:30pm. Depending on the unit, mealtimes were between 7:30–8am for breakfast, 11:30– 2pm for lunch, and around 4:30–5:30pm for dinner.

Findings

- Finding 48. Prisoners' meals were good quality and all prisoners had access to clean drinking water.
- Finding 49. Meals were generally served at appropriate times, though some evening meals were served at 4:30pm.

Good Order

Security

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners are held in a safe environment where security is proportionate to risk and not unnecessarily restrictive.

175. Security features, such as the perimeter fence, were in good order. We observed improvements in the site's physical security features since our 2019 inspection.³⁸ At our 2023 inspection we found that all staff and visitors entered through a single gatehouse that contained a visitors' book that staff ensured visitors signed, an APPE³⁹ card check, a walk-through metal detector, and an x-ray machine. Staff subjected items being x-rayed to an appropriate level of scrutiny. Staff used a hand-held wand to search people who activated the metal detector. As with every other prison in New Zealand, all prisoner telephones and mail may be monitored for the purpose of detecting offences that involve prisoners.
176. The site also had an intelligence officer and a Site Emergency Response Team (SERT).⁴⁰ It was pleasing to note the presence of the SERT as at the time of our previous inspection in 2019, the SERT was not yet in place. The site also had a Gang Management Strategy.
177. On the day of our visit, staff were conducting searches of cars and visitors in the car park. The search was friendly and professional. At the time of our visit, the staff conducting searches in the car park were supported by a drug dog team.
178. Inside the prison we observed that the environment was not unnecessarily restrictive and seemed proportionate to the risk levels of the prisoners. For example, where appropriate, prisoners had access to unit kitchens and communal areas.
179. We observed that the doors in the programmes room in C Block had previously opened inwards. This was a security risk as inward opening doors made it harder for staff to maintain control over movements through the doors. This risk meant the site had not been using the programmes room in C Block. We note the Ombudsman recommended in his 2022 inspection report⁴¹ that the prison undertake remedial work to these doors as a matter of priority so the room could be reinstated for constructive activity. We are pleased to report the remedial work has now been completed. This remedial work has been noted in Corrections' Recommendation Reviewer.

Findings

Finding 50. Staff generally conducted the appropriate security procedures in a professional manner.

³⁸ Previously, the prison did not have a single point of entry (which limits the points where contraband can be introduced).

³⁹ The Authorised Provider Prison Entry (APPE) system is an electronic prison entry system that streamlines the process of entry into prisons for volunteers and non-departmental staff.

⁴⁰ SERT teams respond to incidents and emergencies; they also have an intelligence function and, for example, target the introduction of contraband.

⁴¹ Boshier, P. (2022) Report on an unannounced targeted inspection of Manawatū Prison under the Crimes of Torture Act 1989, Office of the Ombudsman.

Finding 51. The prison environment was not unnecessarily restrictive and seemed proportionate to the risk levels of prisoners.

Finding 52. Remediation work to inward-opening doors in the C Block programmes room was documented as completed which meant the room could be used for constructive activities.

Classification and placement

Inspection Standards

- Classification, placement and treatment are based on an individual assessment of each prisoner's risks and needs.
- Prisoners are held in the appropriate security conditions and can seek review about decisions on their security classification.

180. At the time of our visit, the sentenced prisoners we observed were placed appropriately and held in appropriate security conditions for their risk levels and needs.
181. The majority of prisoners were being held on remand and so did not yet have security classifications but would have been assessed using the remand management tool (RMT). This assessment determines the level of custodial supervision a remand prisoner requires. During our visit we observed remand prisoners were appropriately placed in line with their RMT assessments.
182. None of the sentenced prisoners we interviewed had complaints about decisions on their security classifications. In the six months from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, there was only one complaint from Manawatū Prison to the Office of the Inspectorate regarding security classifications.

Finding

Finding 53. Prisoners were appropriately classified and placed in accordance with their risk and needs.

Segregation and cell confinement

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners are placed on directed segregation only with proper authority and for the shortest time period, which is regularly reviewed. Prisoners understand why they have been segregated.
- Prisoners are kept safe at all times while on directed segregation and individual needs are recognised and given proper attention.
- Cell confinement is subject to strict policies and procedures.
- Prisoners suspected of internal concealment are located in a dry cell as a last resort and the proper authorisation is recorded.

183. Prison management can temporarily separate a prisoner for their own safety (directed protective segregation) or because they pose a threat to the safety of others or the good order of the prison. Collectively, these measures are referred to as directed segregation.⁴²
184. At Manawatū Prison, prisoners who were placed on directed segregation were mostly held in cells 53 – 56 in B Block, but were sometimes held in their own cells but not unlocked with the other men. There were no prisoners on directed segregated at the time of our visit.
185. According to the two segregation registers provided by the site, during the six-month review period, there were 36 directed segregation orders under Section 58, which involved 28 prisoners. Of those 36 orders, eight were revoked early. Revoking directed segregation early indicates the prison management team was actively reviewing behaviour on segregation.
186. Prisoners on directed segregation may be allowed to associate with other men on directed segregation, or may be denied association with all others. Thirty-four of the 36 Section 58 orders were denied association. We reviewed the directed segregation paperwork for the Section 58 orders and noted all but two had been approved by the regional senior advisor, and most prisoners had signed acknowledgement of their management plans.
187. As well as prisoners subject to directed segregation under Section 58, during the six-month review period there were two prisoners held under Section 59(1b). This refers to directed protective segregation which is used if the safety of the prisoner has been put at risk by another person. We reviewed the directed segregation paperwork for the Section 59(1b) orders and noted the proper processes had been followed, including approval by the regional senior advisor.
188. Fourteen prisoners had been subject to Section 60 for the purposes of medical oversight.⁴³ They had been accommodated in residential units.
189. We spoke with the Custodial Systems Manager, who had managed directed segregation for the site since he started in the role in February 2023. He told us he ensured managers completed the necessary daily checks⁴⁴ for prisoners on directed segregation, and that these checks were appropriately recorded.
190. If a prisoner is charged with an offence against discipline and the charge is proved, a hearing adjudicator may impose one or more penalties against the prisoner, including confinement in a cell for up to seven days.⁴⁵ COBRA records for the six-month review period indicated 59 men had served a period of cell confinement during that time.
191. As previously mentioned, at Manawatū Prison, we visited the separates cells in B Block, where, historically, prisoners serving a penalty period of cell confinement had been housed. We observed that these cells were now used for storage. COBRA records showed the separates cells had not been used since 2019. The Principal Corrections Officer confirmed that prisoners

⁴² Corrections Act 2004, Sections 58 and 59 describe segregation for the purposes of security, good order, or safety. A direction expires after 14 days unless the Chief Executive directs that it continues. This situation is reviewed monthly, and if continued after three months is directed and monitored by a Visiting Justice. Prisoners may also be segregated for the purposes of medical oversight (Section 60)

⁴³ We note the Section 60 directed segregation for medical oversight figures provided by the site showed no prisoners being subject to this between 1 October 2022 and the end of January 2023. Medtech records, however, showed there were three for this period. Therefore, there may be record-keeping issues.

⁴⁴ Corrections Regulations 2005, Regulation 56.

⁴⁵ Corrections Regulations 2005, Regulation 158.

no longer served cell confinement in the separates cells, but instead remained in their own cells.

192. At the time of our inspection there were 32 prisoners on voluntary segregation in C Block, and 59 in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit.

Finding

Finding 54. Records indicated that some directed segregation orders were revoked early which showed prison management was actively reviewing behaviour on segregation.

Incentives

Inspection Standards

- Systems of rewards and privileges appropriate for different categories of prisoners are established, in order to encourage prosocial behaviour, develop a sense of responsibility and secure the interest and cooperation of prisoners.

193. At the time of our inspection, there appeared to be no formal system of rewards and privileges for prisoners in B Block, C Block or Te Whare Mahi unit. These units were operating under the Staffing Level Response roster, and staff were ensuring all men had time out of their cells and access to activities and programmes. The site did not have capacity to facilitate any additional activities (such as family days or other events) as an incentive.
194. Men in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit were sentenced prisoners (classified as minimum, low, or low-medium security) and were aware of the benefits of residing in the unit. For example, they understood they got more time out of their cells and more activities than high security prisoners.

Finding

Finding 55. The prison offered limited incentives to encourage prosocial behaviour among the men.

Discipline

Inspection Standards

- Disciplinary sanctions against prisoners are imposed by the proper authority.
- Prisoners are subject to disciplinary procedures which are fair and proportionate and follow due process.
- Prisoners are promptly informed of any disciplinary sanction and understand the charges and procedures they face.

- Interpreter services will be used, where necessary, to explain any disciplinary charges, procedures and the process for defending the charges.
- Prison management does not rely on prisoners for any disciplinary functions, whether in a formal or informal manner.

195. Prisons are required to maintain good discipline and order through effective supervision, communication, and fair and effective disciplinary procedures. Offences against discipline committed by a prisoner can result in a misconduct charge. Disciplinary action must be well documented by staff, and misconduct hearings must comply with statutory and regulatory requirements.⁴⁶ Offences against discipline are outlined in the legislation with guidance on the conduct process described in the Prison Operations Manual.⁴⁷
196. As mentioned above, if a prisoner is charged with an offence against discipline and the charge is proved, a hearing adjudicator or visiting justice may impose one or more penalties against the prisoner. Penalties include forfeiture or postponement of privileges up to 28 days, forfeiture of earnings of up to seven days, or confinement in a cell for up to seven days.⁴⁸
197. During the six-month review period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, COBRA data shows men at the site were charged with 346 misconducts, mostly for sparring/fighting or smoking. In the same period for the previous year there were 291 misconducts, so there was an increase during the current review period. As noted in the Safer Custody Panel meeting minutes from 23 March 2023, this may show that staff were holding prisoners to account for bad behaviour and following consistent practice for placing prisoners on misconduct. Eighty-three (24%) of the 346 misconducts were withdrawn, usually because the prisoner was released or transferred to another site that did not follow up on the misconduct.
198. Misconduct hearings at Manawatū Prison were held weekly. For misconduct hearings to proceed, staff appointed as prosecutors and hearing adjudicators needed to be available. Manawatū Prison had one full-time prosecutor who was supported by staff who had previously been in the role. At the time of our visit, the prosecutor was being deployed to help staff the visits centre every Friday, which meant misconduct hearings only took place four days a week. Both the current prosecutor and an ex-prosecutor we interviewed said that not working on prosecutions on Fridays caused issues with misconduct file preparation. The site has six hearing adjudicators, and no misconducts had been withdrawn due to a lack of hearing adjudicators.
199. If a misconduct is sufficiently serious, an external visiting justice may hear the case. At Manawatū Prison, a visiting justice is on site for two hours every fortnight.
200. Staff told us that due to the current Staffing Level Response roster, witness availability could be an issue. Staff also reported that there could be issues with having enough staff available to escort prisoners to misconduct hearings. Staff told us there were staff rostered for these escorts but they were frequently redeployed to cover duties in other areas of the prison.
201. All the men we interviewed in C Block and Te Whare Mahi unit acknowledged they understood the misconduct process and raised no concerns.

⁴⁶ Prosecutors are staff trained to charge prisoners with an offence and who have responsibility for proving that charge. Hearing adjudicators have the power to hear complaints relating to offences against discipline alleged to have been committed by a prisoner.

⁴⁷ Corrections Act 2004, Section 128-140. POM MC.01

⁴⁸ Corrections Regulations 2005, Regulation 158.

Findings

Finding 56. Nearly a quarter of misconducts had been withdrawn, usually for reasons beyond the site’s control.

Finding 57. The site’s prosecutor was being deployed to support with visits on Fridays due to the low staffing levels. This impacted on the preparation of misconduct files.

Finding 58. The site had a good number of hearing adjudicators and no misconducts had been withdrawn due to a lack of hearing adjudicators.

Health professionals’ role in discipline

Inspection Standards

- Health professionals do not participate in disciplinary sanctions.

202. There was no evidence that health staff had participated in any disciplinary sanctions.

Finding

Finding 59. There was no evidence that health staff had participated in any disciplinary sanctions.

Use of Force

Inspection Standards

- Force is used only against prisoners as a last resort and never as a disciplinary procedure. When used, force is legitimate, necessary, proportionate, and subject to rigorous governance.
- Instruments of restraint are used only in clearly defined circumstances, when lesser forms of control fail, and only for the time strictly required.

203. The Corrections Act, Section 83, states that staff can only use physical force in prescribed circumstances and if reasonably necessary. Corrections policy outlines the circumstances in which force may be needed and what intervention should be deployed. Staff may use force only if there is no other option, in self-defence or the defence of another person, or if a prisoner is attempting to escape, damaging property or resisting a lawful order.⁴⁹ All uses of force must be logged in a use of force register, and a use of force review must be conducted.

204. In the six months from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, 23 instances of use of force were recorded on COBRA. Twenty-one of these were spontaneous and two were planned. A review of the use of force register found all but one of incidents where force was used were appropriately recorded in the register. A review of the incident report which had not been

⁴⁹ POM IR.02 Incident Response

- recorded in the register (which occurred in 2022) confirmed this had not met the threshold for inclusion in the register.
205. We reviewed the site's use of force paperwork for eight spontaneous uses of force. We found most of the correct processes were followed for all eight. For example, the records indicate in each case the on-call manager or PCO was informed, and staff ceased use of force at the earliest opportunity.
206. We found that the use of force register for 2022 did not contain the dates when the use of force reviews had been completed. However, this omission had been rectified in the 2023 register. In the 2023 register, there was one use of force review that was undated but had been closed, and one review from March 2023 that was still open.
207. None of the prisoners we interviewed at Manawatū Prison had been subject to use of force or pepper spray, nor seen these used on other prisoners. We noted that the Safer Custody Panel meeting minutes from 23 March 2023 mentioned tactical options refresher training was being delivered and had been well received by staff.
208. All incidents reviewed had documented post use of force assessments by health staff.

Finding

Finding 60. There were no use of force review dates recorded in the 2022 use of force register, but the 2023 register did record these dates.

Searches

Inspection Standards

- Searches of cells and prisoners are carried out only when necessary and are proportionate, with due respect for privacy and dignity.

209. Contraband (such as drugs, alcohol and weapons) can create risks to safety and good order in a prison. For this reason, prison staff are required to undertake a range of regular searches, including cell searches, and rub-down and strip searches of prisoners.
210. In the six months from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, the site recorded 153 incidents where contraband was found. The largest category of contraband found was recorded as 'Other', which included items such as tattoo equipment, tobacco and smoking equipment, and weapons. We note there are categories for all these items, so they should not have been categorised as 'Other'. Drugs and drugs paraphernalia accounted for 46 contraband incidents.
211. In the six months from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, COBRA records show staff completed ten 'reasonable grounds' strip searches. COBRA had limited records for other types of searches, including cell searches. However, we observed from unit records that cell searches were being conducted. We note the Safer Custody Panel meeting minutes from 26 January 2023 recorded "good searching by staff who are concentrating on cell standards." The meeting minutes set out that the Acting Prison Director had made a directive that cell searching was a mandatory staff activity and reminded staff that SERT searches should be additional to unit searches.

212. During our inspection of Manawatū Prison, we observed staff conducting rub-down searches of prisoners in B Block, C Block, Te Whare Mahi unit, and on leaving the visits area. We observed that most rub-searches were conducted to a high standard, but that some searches were only of reasonable standard and became cursory once staff had reached the prisoners' knee area. We observed several rub-down searches, particularly after visits, where staff did not touch the prisoners' ankle area or ask them to lift or remove their shoes.
213. Prisoners we interviewed in B Block and Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit said they were rubbed down several times a day, including when they went out into the yard, when they came back, and when they left or returned to the unit. None of the prisoners we spoke with had any issues with the rub-down searches.
214. Prisoners we interviewed also said their cells were searched regularly, generally when they were out in the yard. None of the prisoners we spoke with had any issues with cell searches.

Findings

Finding 61. The site was recording searches where contraband was found, although there was insufficient recording of other searches and some items found were incorrectly categorised.

Finding 62. Some rub-down searches were only of reasonable quality as staff did not always rub down all areas of the person.

Purposeful activity

Exercise

Inspection Standards

- All prisoners are able to spend at least one hour in the open air every day.
- Prisoners have access to physical exercise and recreational activities.

215. Every prisoner, other than those engaged in outdoor work, is entitled to a minimum of one hour of physical exercise every day. This exercise may be taken in the open air if the weather permits.
216. At Manawatū Prison at the time of our visit, the main gym in D Block had been closed due to reduced staffing levels. Staff reported that the gym instructor had been redeployed to support staffing levels on site.
217. All prisoners had access to outdoor yards in their units for exercise.
218. Most prisoners had access to varying amounts of gym equipment in the yards. Prisoners in C Block were the least well provided for, with access only to a fixed chin-up bar in their yard. Prisoners in Te Whare Mahi had access to a fixed chin-up bar and two exercycles.
219. Prisoners in B Block had three hours out of their cells for exercise daily. They had access to a unit gym with a basketball and hoop, a weight bag, and pull-up and dip bars. They also had time out of their cells for showering and making telephone calls. As well as the yards, they had internal common areas to use when they were out of their cells.
220. Prisoners in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit were out of their cells from 7:30am to 5:30pm on weekdays, and 8:30am to 5:15pm at weekends. While not working, they had access to a unit gym that contained exercycles, mats, step machines, weight bags and medicine balls. The unit has an internal compound with a grassed area and a concrete area. The unit Principal Corrections Officer told us he has introduced sports days and tournaments for the prisoners. At the time we visited, we observed schedules for tournaments including touch rugby, soccer, tennis, table tennis, cricket, chess and darts. We were told staff joined in these events with the men. There were no tournament matches occurring at the time of our inspection.
221. Prisoners in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit could also access a recreation room and a hobbies room that had activities including board and card games. We observed artwork around the site that had been completed by men in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit. Other activities included kapa haka (taught by one of the prisoners) and cooking. For example, for Anzac Day the Principal Corrections Officer told us they were going to make Anzac biscuits.

Findings

- Finding 63. The main prison gym was closed and the gym instructor had been redeployed to assist with reduced staffing levels.
- Finding 64. All prisoners could exercise in outdoor yards for at least an hour a day.
- Finding 65. Men in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit had many exercise and recreation options and were out of their cells for many hours during the day.

Finding 66. Men in B Block had three hours out of their cells for exercise and fairly limited access to exercise equipment.

Finding 67. Prisoners in C Block and Te Whare Mahi unit had limited access to exercise equipment.

Communication and relationships with family and whānau

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners are encouraged to maintain contact with family/whānau members.
- Prisoners have regular access to visits.
- Prisoners have regular access to telephones and other communications, subject to a risk assessment.
- Prisoners are assisted to contact and consult with legal representatives in relation to family matters.
- A prisoner's family situation is identified and support planning undertaken to proactively assist them in maintaining contact with family.
- Prisoners and their families receive ongoing active support to maintain or re-establish relationships, where it is appropriate.
- Prisoners are located as close as possible to their family/whānau and the community they have a strong attachment to. If prisoners are placed in prisons outside their home region, it is for the minimum time necessary and for an identified reason.
- Staff support prisoners to maintain close relationships with stable family or whānau.
- Prisoners can promptly inform their family or whānau or designated contact person about their imprisonment, transfers, illness or injury.
- Prison staff notify prisoners of the serious illness or death of a family/whānau member or significant other, and a risk/wellbeing assessment is subsequently conducted.

222. Prisoners should be able stay in contact with their family/whānau by telephone, mail, email, in-person visits, and audio-visual link virtual visits. All these modes of communication are reliant on prison staff facilitating access.

223. Prisoners we spoke with throughout Manawatū Prison were generally comfortable with the opportunities they had to contact family/whānau.

224. Several men remarked favourably that telephone calls were now free.⁵⁰ They felt this was helpful in maintaining contact with family/whānau and friends. A few men told us now calls are free, some men talk for longer, and this could make it more difficult to access a telephone in some units. For example, in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit, 60 men had to share two telephones, and some of the men felt this was no longer sufficient during peak times.

⁵⁰ From 11 October 2022, Corrections began transitioning prison sites onto a new telephone system and covering the costs of calls to enable prisoners to maintain contact with family/whānau.

225. Some of the men we interviewed mentioned the lack of privacy when making telephone calls in a crowded unit.
226. Staff in C Block were observed showing compassion for a prisoner who had recently lost a member of his family, which was impacting on his mental health. Staff arranged an additional telephone call to enable him to talk with his family. Staff also arranged for a chaplain to meet with the prisoner to give him further support.
227. Prisoners said the mail service was “pretty good” and they could also access printed emails from their families/whānau.

Findings

Finding 68. Prisoners welcomed the new free telephone calls, though some prisoners reported having more difficulty accessing the telephones due to increased usage.

Finding 69. Prisoners could send and receive mail.

Visits

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners are aware of prison procedures and their visits entitlements.
- Prisoners and their visitors are able to attend visits in a clean, safe and respectful environment which meets their needs.
- Visitors are informed about search procedures, and understand their right to refuse the search and leave the prison.
- Child visitors are searched only when there are reasonable grounds. Reasons for the search should be explained to the child, who should be searched in full view of his/her guardian.
- Visits areas are child friendly and allow for physical contact.
- There is special provision of visits for children at times which are least interruptive of their education and other activities.

228. The prison hosts visits every Friday. There are five visits sessions throughout the day, each session lasting 30 minutes.⁵¹ Each session is restricted to a maximum of ten prisoners, meaning a total of 50 prisoners can receive a visit each week. Bookings for visits are taken on a ‘first-come, first-served’ basis. We reviewed the visits schedule for Friday 21 April and found a total of 35 prisoners attended the five sessions.
229. Prisoners and visitors we spoke with were aware of the visits process and how to make bookings.

⁵¹ This is the minimum entitlement for visits. Every prisoner is entitled to receive at least one private visitor each week, approved through the visitor application process, for a minimum duration of 30 minutes.

230. Many of the prisoners told us they felt 30-minute visits were not long enough, especially for those with families who had to travel long distances, though some of the men did acknowledge that they could apply for extended visits. One of the visitors we spoke with remarked that 30-minute visits were rather short as she had to drive around 50 minutes each way to visit her son.
231. We asked eight prisoners if they were in a prison close to their families. Only two were local (i.e. from Palmerston North or the Manawatū region). Six were from further afield (e.g. Whanganui, Wellington, Rotorua or the South Island). Staff told us prisoners from the region were less likely to spend their sentence close to home as they were sent to other sites to allow more remand prisoners to transit through Manawatū Prison. As previously mentioned, this was due to pressures on the prison network nationwide.
232. We observed the visitor locker key situation was not ideal. Visitors place their property into a locker and place the key into a drawer along with all the other visitors' locker keys. This could mean any one of the visitors could take any of the keys and access items from other lockers. In addition, the onus is on the visitor to remember their locker key number. We observed that at the conclusion of the visit session we attended, one visitor could not remember her key number. We brought this to the attention of the Acting Prison Director and the practice immediately ceased.
233. The visits area was clean, tidy, and welcoming. There was a children's play area with murals, and activities including a box of books, colouring in, and a toy oven. The visits area had nine small tables bolted to the ground, each with four round wooden stools attached for the prisoner and up to three visitors to sit together. There was also an outdoor courtyard with picnic tables that prisoners and their visitors could choose to use. Prisoners were allowed to hug and play with their children. Staff supervising the visits were visible but unobtrusive.
234. Audio-visual link (AVL) visits are available at Manawatū Prison in the weekends on a 'first-in, first-served' booking basis. Several prisoners told us they appreciate these. We were told by one prisoner that AVL visits were "amazing". He said: "It's private enough. It makes you feel you're sitting at home for half an hour. It's comforting."

Findings

- Finding 70. Prisoners could receive visits in a welcoming environment.
- Finding 71. The majority of the prisoners we interviewed were not local to the area which may have impacted upon their ability to have face-to-face visits.
- Finding 72. Some prisoners and visitors felt the minimum entitlement 30-minute visits were too short, especially for those visitors who had to travel longer distances.
- Finding 73. Prisoners could access AVL visits and appreciated these.

Library

Inspection Standards

Prisoners have regular access to a suitable library, library materials and additional learning resources that meet their needs.

235. Manawatū Prison has a library in D Block, with a part-time librarian on site four days a week. The Learning and Interventions Delivery Manager told us only men attending programmes in D Block were currently able to visit the library. All the other men on site could use a catalogue system to order up to two books at a time. Books were delivered to them in their unit at least once a week by the librarian.
236. Most of the men we interviewed were aware they could order books via the catalogue by completing a form, and some of them used this service. Some men said they found the catalogue of limited value as “it doesn’t tell you much about what the book is about – just the title and author”. Some prisoners in B Block did not know about the library or the services it provided.
237. The library had a fairly good range of material, including purchased and donated fiction, legal books, books in te reo Māori, large print books, magazines and graphic novels. Books could also be loaned via a local public library. The librarian also responded to requests for legislation or similar materials.

Finding

Finding 74. Prisoners could generally access library services and reading materials by choosing from a catalogue. However, most men could not visit the site library.

Rehabilitation

Inspection Standards

- Appropriate interventions are provided to reduce the likelihood of reoffending and promote successful reintegration.
- Rehabilitation programmes, targeting the specific needs of the prisoner, are available and accessible.
- There is good cooperation and communication between the prison and social support organisations, including those that deliver rehabilitation programmes in the prison.

238. Rehabilitation programmes help prisoners address the thoughts, attitudes and behaviour that led to their offending, and support them to develop the skills to avoid reoffending after release. Rehabilitation programmes are generally only offered to sentenced or remand convicted prisoners.
239. At Manawatū Prison, most of the prisoners were on remand and so were not eligible for Corrections’ rehabilitation programmes. None of the prisoners we interviewed in C Block or Te Whare Mahi unit had attended any rehabilitation programmes during their current period in prison.
240. During the six-month review period, COBRA records showed eight men had completed a Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme, and ten men had completed a Medium Risk Maintenance Programme.

241. The Learning and Interventions Delivery Manager told us a Short Rehabilitation Programme for sentenced men was starting on 1 May, but that there were not enough eligible men to conduct a Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme.
242. Several men in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit had the perception that prison Drug Treatment Units were now all “run as Māori Focus Units”. They questioned why this was as they felt this was a deterrent to participating for some non-Māori prisoners.
243. Two psychologists visited the site once a week, each seeing one to three prisoners for individual treatment. There were waitlists due a nationwide shortage of psychologists. At the time of our visit, the psychologists were not providing any group work sessions.

Finding

Finding 75. There was limited access to rehabilitation programmes for eligible prisoners at the site.

Offender Plans

Inspection Standards

- All prisoners have an offender plan.
- All prisoners receive support to achieve the targets in their offender plans and progress through their sentence.

244. All prisoners should meet with a case manager who assesses their needs and works with them to create a remand plan or an offender plan, depending on their status as a prisoner. The case manager then supports the prisoner to access purposeful activities and rehabilitation programmes.
245. Most of the sentenced men we spoke with said they had an offender plan, and we confirmed this was the case by checking their IOMS records. Prisoners in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit said access to case managers was good.
246. Some prisoners on remand in B Block did not have remand plans, but this was due to the short length of time they had been in prison. When we interviewed members of the case management team, they highlighted the lack of programmes for remand prisoners, especially as the remand numbers on site had increased. They suggested there was a need for “short, sharp” programmes for prisoners on remand.
247. Prisoners should also have a custodial case officer who actively manages them, for example by discussing offender plan progress and assisting with their needs. We asked four men in C Block and Te Whare Mahi unit who their case officers were; three men did not know, despite having case officers assigned to them in IOMS, but told us staff were approachable and responsive and they could ask any staff member for assistance.

Findings

Finding 76. Most sentenced prisoners had an offender plan and reported that access to case managers was good.

Finding 77. There were limited programmes available for remand prisoners.

Finding 78. Not all prisoners were aware who their case officer was.

Education

Inspection Standards

- Education and vocational training programmes are offered in line with the needs of the learners.

248. Within the first month of entering prison, all prisoners receive an educational assessment and meet one-to-one with an education tutor to co-produce an individual learning pathway. Actions for the learning pathway are shared with the case manager who includes them in the offender plan.
249. At the time of our inspection, one education tutor was available on site. The tutor was part of an education team that was managed by a Learning and Interventions Delivery Manager. Other members of the team included two intervention coordinators, a volunteer support worker, a part-time librarian, and a Release to Work broker.
250. The Learning and Interventions Delivery Manager told us there were several education programmes being delivered on site. Some were offered by providers. Programmes included: literacy and numeracy courses, the Kick for the Seagulls programme⁵², driver licence training, a tikanga programme and secure online learning⁵³ (supported by the education tutor). In the six-month review period, 94 completions had been recorded for all these education and tikanga programmes. There were eight classrooms available in the education area to facilitate these programmes. Prisoners completing education programmes were receiving an incentive payment in line with the national Prisoner Incentive Allowance Framework; the programme/study allowance is set at between 20 and 40 cents an hour.
251. As previously mentioned, we heard from the Learning and Interventions Delivery Manager and the Acting Prison Director that the site had proactively introduced a short course for prisoners to gain accreditation in scaffolding and working at heights. This course was held in the site gym, which the site had repurposed because they could not use it as a gym under the current Staffing Level Response roster. We observed that this was a creative response by the site to make good use of an otherwise under-utilised space.
252. The Learning and Interventions Delivery Manager told us prisoners can find out about educational programmes in multiple ways, including referrals from case managers, from custodial staff or the education tutor, or from notices in their units.
253. The Learning and Interventions Delivery Manager confirmed there were not a lot of activities for men on remand. We interviewed two prisoners on remand who said they had not done any educational programmes because they were not eligible for them. One had completed some educational booklets to keep himself occupied.

⁵² Kick for the Seagulls is a 17-week programme that educates prisoners using the language of sport to teach subjects such as maths, reading and writing.

⁵³ Every prison has a secure online learning suite with computers which prisoners can use to gain digital literacy skills and complete learning assignments. Prisoners have access to a limited range of pre-approved websites and apps.

Findings

Finding 79. Sentenced prisoners had access to a wide range of education focused programmes, though there was limited access for remand prisoners.

Finding 80. The site had proactively re-purposed the site gym to provide a short course on scaffolding and working at heights, which provided a good training opportunity.

Work

Inspection Standards

- All prisoners, where possible, can engage in work that is purposeful, benefits them and increases their employability.
- Prisoners’ health and safety is safeguarded during all work activities to the same standards as in community based work.
- Prisoners receive a fair incentive payment for the work they perform.

254. Prisons should provide work opportunities for prisoners in their units, around the prison, and in prison industries.
255. At Manawatū Prison, all but one of the sentenced men in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit had a job. Sixteen of the men in this unit were employed in the kitchen, and 15 did prison landscaping and grounds work. The other men in this unit were mostly employed as cleaners. One man was employed in the site laundry. Incentive payments were in place for these men in line with the national Prisoner Incentive Allowance Framework. This framework gives an allowance rate of between 20 and 60 cents an hour, depending on the work being undertaken.
256. In the other units, a few prisoners were able to do some unit-based cleaning or laundry work. However, the majority of prisoners in most units had no work.
257. In Te Whare Mahi unit, there were three small planter gardens within the unit compound, containing broccoli, various herbs, and an apple tree. We observed that these gardens were well-maintained and men we spoke with displayed pride and care for the plants. However, the men in this unit (who were all on remand) had no jobs and, at an impromptu focus group of ten men, observed “there is nothing to do”.

Findings

Finding 81. Sentenced prisoners in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit had good access to work opportunities, but there was limited access to work in other units.

Religious or spiritual support

Inspection Standards

- Prisoners are supported by the chaplaincy, which contributes to prisoners’ overall care, support and rehabilitation.
- Prisoners’ freedom of religion is respected, and they are able to practise their religion.

258. At Manawatū Prison, men can access faith-based support from two chaplains who work Monday to Friday. The chaplains told us if a prisoner requested to see them it would typically take up to two weeks before they actually met them. They felt the shortage of available custodial officers was an issue and that this, and the lack of suitable interview space, was impacting on their ability to provide personal spiritual support to the men.
259. The chaplains held three or four religious services every Tuesday. These were usually well-attended. Services used to be held on Sunday, but this was stopped in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. The change from Sunday to Tuesday services meant many prisoners could not attend a service every week for a number of reasons, including issues with mixing prisoners and the location of the room. The chaplains were not aware of any plans to start Sunday services again.
260. The prison used to have a chapel. However, this had been repurposed as a programmes room so religious services were now held in a classroom. The chaplains said they would have preferred a dedicated “wairua space” for spiritual wellbeing, but they were aware of site limitations.
261. Several prisoners told us a chaplain visited their unit once or twice a week. One prisoner told us COVID-19 restrictions had stopped church group volunteers coming to the site to provide additional spiritual support.
262. The chaplains told us there were few men from religions other than Christianity on site. However, the chaplains could provide religious items such as Korans and prayer mats if prisoners requested them. Access to leaders from a range of religions could be facilitated via telephone.

Finding

Finding 82. Prisoners had access to chaplains, but custodial staff shortages and lack of suitable facilities were impacting on their ability to provide spiritual support.

Reintegration

- Inspection Standards**
- Where possible, prisoners are housed in prisons close to their families or in prisons which meet their rehabilitative needs.
 - Prisoners are able to keep up to date with news and the outside world while in prison, where appropriate.
 - Prison management actively prepares prisoners for their release by facilitating access to post-release services.
 - Prisoners with continuing health and social care needs are prepared and assisted to access appropriate services in the community prior to their release.

- Prisoners with drug and/or alcohol problems are prepared for release and have access to appropriate support and continued treatment in the community.
- Prior to release, prisoners have an up-to-date plan for addressing outstanding rehabilitation needs, which is managed in partnership with Community Corrections.
- Prisoners are given all necessary practical support and support information ready for their day of release.
- Pre and post-release reintegration programmes are available and are gender responsive.
- Offender plans are gender responsive and take into account, and plan for, prisoner's post-release social reintegration requirements from the beginning of their sentence.

263. Reintegration activities aim to help prisoners identify and overcome any barriers to successfully transitioning back into the community.
264. In the six-month review period from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, 85 prisoners were released from Manawatū Prison.
265. Case managers assist sentenced prisoners to develop a release plan as they approach release. At Manawatū Prison, COBRA records showed case managers met the standard for release planning in 97% of cases in the six months from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.
266. The case management team had a Guided Release case manager, who facilitated reintegration activities for prisoners completing longer sentences.⁵⁴
267. COBRA records showed that during the six-month review period, 18 men had been involved in the Out of Gate programme, which supports prisoners on remand or serving short sentences.
268. Members of the case management team highlighted the large number of remand prisoners currently at the site. They reported that most of the remand prisoners were transferred to other prisons when they were sentenced. This meant the team could not create meaningful working relationships with prisoners, nor work with them through their rehabilitation and reintegration pathways.
269. Members of the case management team told us securing accommodation for released prisoners could be challenging. The team told us there was accommodation available via the local Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society (PARS) and that communication with PARS was very good. However, they told us some prisoners did not want to go to PARS accommodation. For example, prisoners who had been on voluntary segregation typically did not want to live with other former prisoners for safety reasons. In addition, PARS had its own entry criteria which some men did not meet.
270. The case management team told us they were not responsible for release planning for remand prisoners released on bail, and added that there was currently no bail support officer for the site. This concern for men released on bail was echoed by staff in the Receiving Office, who told us some men were bailed locally with no accommodation to go to, or they were

⁵⁴ People serving long prison sentences who have an identified reintegrative need and meet the criteria for Temporary Release specified in Regulation 26 of the Corrections Regulations 2005, can be considered for Guided Release. Case managers work more intensively with these people.

bailed with the expectation that they were to get to their home cities, such as Auckland, after 4pm on a Friday at the conclusion of court. Staff in the Receiving Office told us although there is an after-hours probation contact, often they do not answer. The Receiving Office staff told us during COVID-19, "pre-loaded cards" were introduced to give men such as these some financial support. However, these cards had since been taken away, meaning some men were bailed with no accommodation, no way of getting home, and no financial support on release.

271. The Release to Work programme allows minimum security prisoners who are assessed as suitable to leave prison during the day to engage in paid employment in the community. This programme helps prisoners gain employment on release. At the time of our inspection, the Assistant Prison Director confirmed only one man was on Release to Work, and that the site was engaging with five or six employers in the hope of increasing this.
272. We met the site Iwi Liaison Officer, who also acts as Kaiwhakamana for the site. He told us the iwi had had little contact with the site in the recent past and had been concerned about their involvement due to changes in leadership at the prison. However, he told us he had noticed a difference since the appointment of the current Acting Prison Director in September 2022, and he hoped this consistency could be maintained. He also felt strongly about the need to look at employment opportunities which would benefit the men in the areas they were returning to, and the need for skills to be taught in the prison. He was encouraged that there was a short course for prisoners in scaffolding and working at heights.
273. Some of the remand prisoners we spoke with did not have release plans but said if they had been released by the court they could have returned to their communities with ease. Two prisoners had plans to live with relatives on release.
274. Several prisoners we interviewed were able to talk about current issues outside the prison, indicating they were able to keep up to date, probably via radio or television news.

Findings

Finding 83. There were limited opportunities for the case management team to work with prisoners through their rehabilitation and reintegration pathways as many prisoners were transferred following sentencing or were on remand.

Finding 84. Access to accommodation could be an issue for some prisoners on release, particularly those who had been on voluntary segregation.

Finding 85. There was no bail support officer at the site, and some staff highlighted that there could be a lack of reintegrative support for men released on bail.

Finding 86. Only one prisoner was accessing the Release to Work programme, and the site was working to increase this.

Finding 87. Prisoners had opportunities to keep up with news and the outside world.

Prison Staff

Inspection Standards

- All prison staff who work with prisoners have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude, and are trained to work in line with professional and human rights standards.
- There is an adequate number of custodial staff to manage prisoners safely.
- Staff are good role models for prisoners and relationships between them are professional, positive and courteous.
- Prisoners have a dedicated member of staff who supports them to make positive changes in their lives.
- Prison staff include a sufficient number of specialists, which could include social workers, teachers, trade instructors, counsellors and psychologists.

275. Staff morale at Manawatū Prison appeared to be generally high, and many staff we spoke with showed pride in their work and in the site. Several staff told us morale had improved recently with the arrival of a new Acting Prison Director in September 2022. Some staff told us that in the past there had been a poor staff culture with high turnover of staff, but things were more settled now.
276. As previously mentioned, at the time of our inspection, Manawatū Prison was operating under a Staffing Level Response (SLR) Roster due to ongoing custodial staff shortages. Shortages of custodial staff, both at the site and nationwide, were of concern to many staff. Custodial staff we spoke with were positive about the idea of new staff starting, but several pointed out that, short-term, new staff increased their workload as they needed training and support.
277. The Acting Prison Director told us around 30% of the custodial staff at the site had less than three years of experience. Staff with less than three years of experience may not be used to working in a fully operational prison as they started during COVID-19 restrictions. These staff may need additional support when the current regime changes to a fully operational regime.
278. Despite the overall high morale, several custodial staff told us “a lot” of custodial staff were doing overtime to keep the site running, and that the constant 12-hour shifts left staff tired and burned out, even on their days off. They said there had been some eight and ten-hour shifts, but these were no longer available, which was a source of frustration. Several non-custodial specialist or support staff told us they had observed that custodial staff were tired or burned out due to the staff shortages and the 12-hour shifts. One of the staff union representatives on site told us staff were “nervous” about what the rosters might look like in future and how these might affect shift times. However, another of the staff union representatives said it would be difficult to return to the previous rosters as “staff enjoyed this roster system”.
279. Some staff had health and safety concerns around night shifts. They told us that on occasion there were reduced staff rostered to certain tasks which meant there was limited cover during comfort breaks, and there may be limited support for the staff member should they require it.
280. We observed custodial staff interacting with prisoners in a professional, empathetic and respectful manner across the site. All the prisoners we interviewed told us staff were

responsive and helpful. Typical comments included that staff “were good to talk to”, “listened to requests” and “actioned things”. A prisoner in Te Kaitiaki Wairua unit said staff were “awesome” and that the Principal Corrections Officer talked to prisoners “all the time” and was always “out and about on the floor”.

281. We observed there was a good relationship between health and custodial staff, though the shortage of custodial staff to provide prisoner escorts restricted the ability of health clinics to function properly. During nurses’ medication rounds we observed good support from custodial staff in B Block and C Block. There was less custodial support in Te Kaitiaki Wairua and Te Whare Mahi units. In these units, we observed men coming to the guard room window for medications and the nurse managing these interactions alone.
282. The population of mainly remand prisoners (66%) meant some members of the case management team felt they were “treading water” as they could not develop long-term working relationships with prisoners because once prisoners were sentenced they were generally transferred to another prison. This meant job satisfaction was low for some members of the case management team.
283. We met with several specialist staff, support staff and volunteers. They all said they felt safe and well-supported on site.

Findings

Finding 88. Staff morale was generally high, but staff were concerned about ongoing custodial staff shortages and the impact of these on staff health and wellbeing.

Finding 89. We observed staff behaving in a professional and empathetic manner with prisoners across the site.

Finding 90. Health and custodial staff had good working relationships, though custodial staff shortages sometimes impacted on the delivery of health services.

Finding 91. Job satisfaction was reported as low for some members of the case management team due to the large numbers of remand prisoners who were transferred away from the site once sentenced.

Appendix A – Images



Image 1: Prisoner escort vehicle



Image 2: Receiving Office holding room



Image 3: Health Centre



Image 4: Cell in Te Whare Mahi unit



Image 5: B Block corridor



Image 6: B Block yard with mural



Image 7: Te Whare Mahi yard exercise equipment



Image 8: Te Whare Mahi unit kitchen



Image 9: Education classroom



Image 10: Evening meal



Image 11: Visits, children's area



Image 12: Visits seating

Appendix B – Corrections' response



06 October 2023

Janis Adair
Chief Inspector
Department of Corrections

By email: janis.adair@corrections.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Janis

Re: Draft Report on Manawatu Prison Announced Inspection 17-21 April 2023

On behalf of Corrections, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft inspection report for Manawatu Prison. Prison inspections play an important role in building a culture of continuous improvement for Corrections.

We were pleased that overall the report noted men at Manawatu Prison were accommodated in a clean and well-maintained environment, felt safe from bullying and violence, and staff were professional in their interactions with the men in prison. The men interviewed as part of your report provided positive feedback regarding contact with custodial and health staff, and they were easily able to access appointments with medical staff. It was also encouraging to note there is good collaboration across the region, particularly arrangements with Whanganui Prison.

Your report highlighted that staff morale was generally high with good leadership, but staff had raised concerns regarding custodial staff shortages, especially the impact on their health and wellbeing. Manawatu Prison has had several new staff including 29 frontline custodial officers start since February 2023, with several more due to commence in the near future. There is also a Lead Bail Support Officer who recently started, and once fully established the Bail Support team will work closely with the Case Management team. Bail Support Services for Manawatu are expected to be in place from January 2024.

With their continued focus on recruitment, the site has a number of initiatives in place to support staff health and wellbeing. This includes weekly kai and kōrero sessions, refocussed wellness days, the provision of manaaki meals, and an upcoming health and wellbeing expo.

Within your report you also highlighted a number of areas identified for continuous improvement such as access to cultural activities for men in prison. The site celebrates Māori cultural events with energy and pride. A recent

example of this was their Matariki celebrations where staff and the men participated in a range of activities including kapa haka and preparing a hangi for all to enjoy.

Enhancing access to cultural activities will be a focus for the two dedicated Pou Arahi positions that are being established. One of these positions will support men to connect with their culture and whānau, with the other position supporting the cultural capability of our staff. The two roles will work together to increase the opportunities at Manawatu for staff and men to take part in activities grounded in te ao Māori.

As you will be aware, a new temporary youth unit opened at Manawatu Prison on 14 August 2023. The 12-bed unit will house both remand and sentenced young adults and run in accordance with our existing practice guidance for youth units. The new unit will operate on a temporary basis until such time as a longer-term solution is determined.

Our new unit will seek to deliver a range of educational, vocational, psychological, mental health, whānau support, and recreational services in a structured and supportive environment. As with our other youth unit at Christchurch Men's Prison, the new unit at Manawatu will have a higher Corrections Officer to prisoner ratio compared to adult units. This enables more time for staff to interact with the young people, develop positive connections and reduce escalations in risk.

The Prison Director and management team at Manawatu Prison are enthusiastic about the opportunity. Dedicated staff with special interest for working with young people have been rostered into the unit and have received specialised training from our Youth Team.

Overall, the inspection report contains much that is positive. It recognises there are still areas for further improvement in meeting the needs of people in prison and providing a healthy environment for staff. Determinations about priorities and actions will be a joint approach led primarily by the Prison Director at Manawatu Prison and the Regional Operations Director Health. This lead role will shift to the prison General Manager and the regions General Manager Pae Ora when the new structure confirmed in Te Ara Whakamua goes live.

We trust you are satisfied with our response to the draft report. Please advise if you have any concerns or questions about the information provided.

Ngā mihi nui


Leigh Marsh
National Commissioner

Shaun Sullivan
Shaun Sullivan
Deputy Chief Executive Health (acting)