

Whanganui Prison

Inspection

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Foreword

This is one of a series of public reports on scheduled inspections of New Zealand prisons.

The inspections are intended to provide a 'window into prisons', giving early warning of emerging risks and challenges, and highlighting areas of innovation and good practice that other prisons might wish to follow.

Inspections are carried out against a set of healthy prison standards which are derived from United Nations guidelines for the treatment of people in detention.¹ Prison performance is assessed under four principles:

- » **Safety:** Prisoners are held safely.
- » **Respect:** Prisoners are treated with respect for human dignity.
- » **Rehabilitation:** 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 re-offending.

The purpose of the prison system is to protect society from crime, both during imprisonment and after release.² The four principles reflect that purpose, and also highlight the potentially competing demands that are often placed on prison staff and management.

In an ideal world, prisons would be able to deliver on all four principles on all occasions. In practice, safety, humane treatment, and rehabilitation and reintegration needs are sometimes balanced against one another, and short-term requirements sometimes take precedence over longer-term needs.

I encourage prison directors, managers and staff to use these principles as a guide to decision-making, and to foster continual improvement that, as much as possible, sees their prisons deliver on all four principles.

In general, Whanganui Prison had a well maintained physical environment and met prisoners' basic needs for food, shelter, clothing and bedding. However, some of the units were poorly ventilated and prone to overheating.

The inspection identified that prisoners were kept safe throughout the prison. In the period before our site visit gang tensions had been heightened due to a shooting in the community. Staff managed these tensions effectively by keeping prisoners from rival factions apart. Throughout the prison, staff appeared highly active and engaged in supervising and managing prisoners.

Prisoners had adequate time out of their cells in all units, and the prison placed considerable emphasis on ensuring that all prisoners – including those in high security units – had access to rehabilitation and training opportunities. The prison had also increased its emphasis on ensuring that prisoners were ready for parole once they reached their eligibility date.

¹ As well as considering the four principles, the healthy prison standards require inspectors to consider nine specific areas of prison life: reception and admission, first days in custody, good order, duty of care, environment, health, escorts and transfers, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

² United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (The Nelson Mandela Rules), rule 4. Also see Corrections Act 2004, ss 5, 6.

A significant proportion of prisoners – especially in low-medium security units – were engaged in industry, treatment and/or learning programmes. The prison's wrap-around programme for young Māori prisoners was innovative and showed promising initial results.

As well as conducting our scheduled programme of prison inspections, the Office of the Inspectorate will be providing ongoing monitoring through the work of Regional Inspectors. In addition to their general responsibilities, the Regional Inspectors will report to me on matters specifically identified in this report.

My oversight of these inspections will provide significant ongoing and critical insight into prisons. I am confident this will provide assurance that any shortcomings will be identified and addressed at pace, and that examples of good practice will be shared so that other prisons can benefit.

I acknowledge the cooperation of Whanganui Prison's management and staff, both during the inspection and since, and I look forward to working with them as I continue to monitor progress.



Janis Adair
Chief Inspector of Corrections

Overview

1. Whanganui Prison is located near Kaitoke, east of Whanganui. It houses remand and sentenced male prisoners from minimum to high security classifications.
2. Whanganui Prison also manages the New Plymouth Remand Centre which is located at the New Plymouth Police Station.
3. Our inspection took place during a 12-week period beginning 1 August 2018. This included on-site inspection and field work which took place from 23 to 28 September 2018.

Our findings

Transport and reception

- Finding 1. Prisoners found the Prisoner Escort Vehicles small and uncomfortable and were being transported for considerable periods of time with no access to toilet facilities.
- Finding 2. During reception and admission, prisoners were kept safe and treated in a fair and professional manner. Staff were generally clear and thorough in their communication and their assessment of prisoners' needs. Not all risk/needs/shared cell assessments were completed on time, and there was evidence of assessments being recorded as completed even when prisoners were non-compliant or there were English language barriers.
- Finding 3. Nurses contacted prisoners' general practitioners to ensure continuity of treatment, but the Health Centre did not use the GP2GP transfer function which could have provided more comprehensive health information. During reception interviews, nurses gave prisoners little information about health services, and did not give them the Department of Corrections' 'Managing Your Health in Prison' pamphlet.

First days in custody

- Finding 4. Prisoners in high security units received induction interviews and information after arriving in their residential units to help them understand rules and routines.
- Finding 5. Most prisoners in low-medium and minimum security units received induction information on arrival in their unit. While prisoners were generally satisfied with the information they received, in a small number of cases the inductions were cursory or were not provided in a language that the prisoner could understand.

High security units

- Finding 6. In general the high security units provided a safe physical environment in which prisoners' needs were met. Ventilation was poor in some units, making them too hot at times. Some showers and lights were not working. In some cells the toilets could be seen through the cell door grille.
- Finding 7. Staff generally managed gang tensions effectively under challenging circumstances, keeping prisoners from rival factions apart. In spite of these challenges, prisoners in the high security units were generally kept safe from violence and intimidation.

- Finding 8. Staff were active in their units, communicated effectively with prisoners, and were generally vigilant at detecting contraband, though rub-down searches in some units were not adequate to detect items concealed in prisoners' clothing.
- Finding 9. Even though some high security units operated multiple unlock regimes, most prisoners were able to spend about four to six hours per day out of their cells.
- Finding 10. Rehabilitation opportunities were limited for high security prisoners, but the prison offered education and work opportunities, and an increased range of volunteer run programmes and activities. Prisoners had good access to the gym and exercise opportunities, and reasonable access to library books. Prisoners were appreciative of these opportunities and as a result were less likely to get bored or frustrated than they otherwise might. The prison had made an effort to increase industry, treatment and learning opportunities for remand and high security sentenced prisoners.

New Plymouth Remand Centre

- Finding 11. The New Plymouth Remand Centre provided a safe and secure environment in which prisoners were generally kept safe and their basic needs were met. Prisoners had several hours out of their cells each day and enjoyed opportunities to exercise.
- Finding 12. Because most prisoners stayed for only a short time, they were not offered industry, treatment and learning programmes.
- Finding 13. The room used for strip searches is very small and not fit for purpose. Additionally, prisoners told us the air conditioning was noisy and too hot, particularly in summer.
- Finding 14. The Remand Centre did not have a visits centre which meant opportunities to maintain contact with family and friends were limited.

Low-medium security units

- Finding 15. The low-medium security units were well maintained and mostly free of graffiti. The units generally met prisoners' needs for food, water and bedding, although clothing was old and worn out.
- Finding 16. Prisoners in the low-medium security units were generally safe from violence and intimidation. Fights and standovers sometimes occurred but were not common.
- Finding 17. The prison offered a good range of rehabilitation programmes, and opportunities for learning, training and work, to sentenced prisoners in low-medium security units. A large proportion of prisoners were engaged in these activities. Prisoners were also supported to use their time constructively in other ways, including exercise, and to maintain contact with families.
- Finding 18. The wrap-around pilot programme for young Māori men was innovative and was showing signs of success at engaging prisoners in training and rehabilitation opportunities.

Self Care Units

- Finding 19. The Self Care Units were clean and well maintained. Prisoners were safe, with no evidence of violence or intimidation among prisoners.
- Finding 20. Prisoners had extensive unlock time and some were engaged in constructive activities such as employment outside the prison. Rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities were limited and some prisoners had Release to Work employment.
- Finding 21. Prisoners in internal Self Care were not able (due to security concerns) to manage their own budgeting and cooking.

Health

- Finding 22. In general, prisoners at Whanganui Prison received a reasonable standard of health care which was comparable to what they could expect to receive in the community.
- Finding 23. The site was not able to cover rostered shifts when nurses were on leave, which put additional pressure on the team and impacted on delivery of care to prisoners.
- Finding 24. The Health Centre was short of holding cells and there was no appropriate and therapeutic space available for Improving Mental Health clinicians to see prisoners.
- Finding 25. The lack of dedicated custodial staff impacted on service delivery at times.
- Finding 26. Some of the processes for obtaining patient information, managing appointments and recalls could compromise patient care.
- Finding 27. Staff in the ISU did not have mental health training and were being asked to manage prisoners with challenging mental health conditions.
- Finding 28. Staff, at times, failed to properly document their actions which posed a significant and high risk.

Reintegration

- Finding 29. Staff and management placed considerable emphasis on planning and preparing for prisoners' reintegration into the community, and the prison granted a high proportion of applications for reintegration activities such as Guided Release. Parole readiness meetings addressed issues with rehabilitation and barriers to parole.
- Finding 30. Among prisoners who were due for release or eligible for parole, not all had accommodation arranged. Some prisoners – especially those on short-term sentences or those needing high-intensity programmes – had not completed any rehabilitation programmes.

Introduction

Whanganui Prison

4. Whanganui Prison was established in 1978 and is located near Kaitoke, east of Whanganui. New Plymouth Remand Centre was established in 2013 and is managed by Whanganui Prison.
5. Together, these facilities can accommodate up to 581 prisoners with security classifications from minimum to high, including remand prisoners (557 male prisoners at Whanganui Prison and 24 male and female prisoners at New Plymouth Remand Centre).
6. Whanganui Prison is one of 17 public prisons in New Zealand. Together with one prison run as a public private partnership, these prisons operate under the direction of the National Commissioner Corrections Services. The prisons operate in four regions – Northern, Central, Lower North, and Southern – each led by a Regional Commissioner. Whanganui Prison is one of five prisons in the Lower North Region.

Prisoners

7. Our scheduled inspection took place over a 12-week period beginning 1 August 2018. On 31 July 2018, the prison housed 525 prisoners (155 on remand and 370 sentenced). The prison population had fallen from 563 at the end of February 2018.

Staff

8. On 31 July 2018, the prison had:
 - » 228 full-time equivalent (FTE) custodial staff with another 13.44 FTE positions vacant
 - » 18 FTE case managers with one vacancy – case managers are responsible for overseeing prisoners' progress towards rehabilitation and reintegration goals
 - » 13.7 FTE nurses and other health staff with no vacancies
 - » 21 instructors with two vacancies – instructors deliver education and training programmes
9. Prison management included a prison director and managers for residential units, health, custodial systems, operations support and security.
10. On 31 July 2018, 12 custodial staff were absent on long-term leave. A prison manager told us that, due to absences and to staff who were completing their training, the prison was not always able to cover all duties.
11. Union representatives told us staff fatigue was an issue, and some long-serving staff were due to retire which would leave a gap in skills and experience.

Inspection criteria

12. We assessed Whanganui Prison against a set of healthy prison standards, which are derived from United Nations principles for the treatment of people in detention:
 - » **Safety:** Prisoners are held safely.
 - » **Respect:** Prisoners are treated with respect for human dignity.
 - » **Rehabilitation:** 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 re-offending.³

13. A prison's success at achieving these standards depends on a range of factors, including:
 - » an environment and routines that are safe and secure without being unduly restrictive;
 - » effective supervision, management and discipline to minimise risks of violence and disorder and encourage constructive use of time;
 - » positive and respectful staff-prisoner relationships to encourage voluntary compliance with prison rules and procedures;
 - » opportunities for prisoners to take part in constructive activities that support positive change, including physical activity, treatment and rehabilitation programmes, education and training opportunities, work experience, and time to associate with others; and
 - » a clear and consistent pathway towards rehabilitation, release, and successful reintegration.

Inspection process

14. During our inspection:
 - » We interviewed 29 prisoners about life in prison and readiness for release back into the community. This included 16 from high security units, eight from low-medium security units, three from minimum security Self Care Units, and two from the Intervention and Support Unit.
 - » We interviewed prison managers, custodial staff, and other staff such as health professionals, case managers and programme facilitators.
 - » We visited the prison's residential units to assess their physical condition, and to observe prison operations including staff-prisoner interactions and prisoner activities. During these visits we spoke with prisoners and staff informally.
 - » We visited industry and rehabilitation programme facilities, the prison's health centre, and other prison facilities.
 - » We inspected the prison's perimeter and entrances.
 - » We attended prison meetings where prison staff discussed prisoners' progress and considered applications for temporary release.
15. On 9 May 2019, we provided the Department of Corrections' National Commissioner Corrections Services with a draft of this report. The National Commissioner responded to the draft on 11 June 2019, and summaries of her responses have been incorporated into this report. We acknowledge the work that has taken place at the prison in response to our findings.

Report structure

16. The following sections describe what we found during our inspection, with a particular focus on risks or barriers to safety, humane treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration, and on innovations that support those principles.
17. The report's structure follows the prisoner's experience – from reception into prison, through life in the prison's residential units, to health and other services, through to release and reintegration.

³ These four principles (or close variations) are used by prison inspectorates in the United Kingdom and Australian states, among others, and are consistent with the basic principles in the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the purpose and principles of the Corrections Act 2004.

Transport and reception

Transport

18. Prisoners are transported to and from Whanganui Prison for a range of reasons, including transfers to and from other prisons, transfers to and from court, and temporary removal for purposes such as medical treatment and reintegration. During the six months to 31 July 2018, the prison received 599 prisoners, and 636 exited.
19. We saw prisoners getting into a Prisoner Escort Vehicle (PEV) for transport to another prison. Staff were clear and respectful with prisoners and this was reflected in the prisoners' behaviour. Among the 29 prisoners we interviewed, 10 raised concerns about transport. This included four who said the cubicles were too small and five who said the journey was very rough, uncomfortable or painful. Several mentioned the lack of a toilet (each PEV cubicle has a floor drain, which are not intended as toilets but prisoners sometimes use them for that purpose).
20. Staff told us that escorts/movement staff were often reassigned to work in residential units, which left the team short-staffed. Other staff were then called in, to conduct escorts, who were not as skilled at driving the PEVs or knowledgeable about routes.
21. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that planned rest stops were needed for long haul escorts. The site will monitor escorts and journey plans to ensure breaks are being planned appropriately. Corrections is reviewing the national PEV standards and specifications and the Inspectorate's findings will inform this review. New standards and specifications are expected to be implemented by June 2020.

Audio visual suite

22. The prison has a secure audio visual link (AVL) suite that can be used for court or parole hearings, lawyer consultations, probation interviews, and visits with family. Having this facility reduces the need to transport prisoners to and from court and therefore reduces risks associated with transport and temporary escort.
23. The suite was well designed with three holding cells, all in good condition, and good CCTV coverage. There was no toilet in the suite so prisoners had to be escorted elsewhere, when those facilities were required.
24. Among prisoners we interviewed, one expressed dissatisfaction that family members could not join in AVL court appearances to show their support. Otherwise none of the prisoners had any concerns about the use of and access to AVL.
25. Staff told us the suite was used about 1,700 times per year. There were some challenges with courts requesting AVL access to prisoners who were not at the prison, and with lawyers dialling into the wrong AVL booths.

Reception

26. When prisoners arrive at Whanganui Prison, they are processed through the Receiving Office. There, prisoners are strip searched, and custodial and health staff then conduct an immediate needs assessment (covering matters such as health, mental health and childcare) and a risk assessment (covering risks to safety, including risks of self-harm) before assigning the prisoner to

- a residential unit. Before placing prisoners in shared cells, a Shared Accommodation Cell Risk Assessment (SACRA) must be carried out to determine whether there are any safety risks.⁴
27. The Receiving Office was well designed, allowing staff to escort prisoners securely and supervise them while they are in holding cells. The office has a walk-through metal detector and a CellSense detector to detect items concealed within prisoners' clothing or bodies.
 28. We observed prisoners as they were received and interviewed for their risk and needs assessments. Staff communicated clearly and engaged with prisoners in a professional manner, and were thorough in assessing any risks or needs.
 29. As part of the reception process, prisoners at Whanganui Prison and the New Plymouth Remand Centre are seen by a nurse who assesses them to determine immediate physical and mental health needs. Following this, prisoners are scheduled for an Initial Health Assessment and mental health screening.
 30. We checked documentation for eight prisoners who were received in the week beginning 8 September 2018. All had their Reception Health Triage assessments and follow-up Initial Health Assessments except for one, who was acutely mentally unwell and went directly to the Intervention and Support Unit. We saw evidence that, following reception to prison, nurses contacted prisoners' general practitioners to obtain medical histories and ensure that existing treatment was continued. The prison used the electronic patient management system MedTech, but not the GP2GP transfer function which could have provided more comprehensive health information.
 31. During the reception interviews we observed, nurses gave prisoners little information about health services, and did not give them the Department of Corrections' 'Managing Your Health in Prison' pamphlet.
 32. At New Plymouth Remand Centre, the reception area was shared with Police. The reception area is located on the ground floor of the Police station, where there is also a health room (shared between Corrections and Police) and an At Risk cell for the remand centre. Other remand centre facilities are located on the station's top floor.
 33. Of the 29 prisoners we interviewed (at both the New Plymouth Remand Centre and Whanganui Prison), no-one raised any concerns about their treatment during reception. Most prisoners confirmed they had completed the required assessments and had been well treated. One prisoner experienced English language barriers. The Department of Corrections prisoner database records him as having received his risk assessment with no interpreter present. Instead, staff used Google Translate to complete the process. His immediate needs assessment was not recorded as being completed.
 34. We also observed two prisoners who were being released, and two others who were being handed over to Police for court appearances. In all cases, Receiving Office staff communicated clearly with prisoners and others.
 35. We reviewed files for 30 prisoners who were received at the prison during our inspection period. All were recorded as having risk assessments completed, and all but one was recorded as having an immediate needs assessment completed. One was recorded as having these assessments completed even though he refused to answer questions or engage with staff. He threatened self-harm and was transferred from the Receiving Office to the Intervention and Support Unit.

⁴ The risk assessment takes into account a prisoner's age, offending history, gang affiliation, prison experience, size and strength, mental health, risks of violence and/or self harm, special needs, health needs, security classification, segregation status, sentence status, and other factors relevant to site safety and good order.

36. During the inspection period, 536 SACRAs should have been completed. The Department of Corrections database showed 22 were recorded as being completed late and 17 recorded as not having been started. Of those recorded as late, most were recorded as completed soon after the prisoner was placed in his cell, indicating that the assessments may have been completed on time but not immediately entered into the system.
37. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that the site was establishing a monitoring programme to ensure assessments were completed correctly and on time. This will be monitored to ensure practice improvements have been embedded. Information about the Department of Internal Affairs' Language Line have been disseminated across the site and staff have been made aware of the requirement to involve interpreters for assessments with non-English speaking prisoners.
38. The National Commissioner also advised that the GP2GP electronic notes system was now in place and the 'Managing Your Health in Prison' pamphlet was made available to all prisoners when they arrived at the Receiving Office.

Property

39. When prisoners arrive, their clothing and property is sorted and stored at the prison's Property Office. Prisoners can also ask family and friends to send them property (such as underwear or other clothing, and telephone cards), and this too is sorted in the Property Office, along with mail to the prison.
40. Among prisoners we interviewed, most said that they received property sent to the prison within a reasonable timeframe. In the six months to 31 July 2018, prisoners made 16 complaints about property.

Findings

- Finding 1. Prisoners found the Prisoner Escort Vehicles small and uncomfortable and were being transported for considerable periods of time with no access to toilet facilities.
- Finding 2. During reception and admission, prisoners were kept safe and treated in a fair and professional manner. Staff were generally clear and thorough in their communication and their assessment of prisoners' needs. Not all risk/needs/shared cell assessments were completed on time, and there was evidence of assessments being recorded as completed even when prisoners were non-compliant or there were English language barriers.
- Finding 3. Nurses contacted prisoners' general practitioners to ensure continuity of treatment, but the Health Centre did not use the GP2GP transfer function which could have provided more comprehensive health information. During reception interviews, nurses gave prisoners little information about health services, and did not give them the Department of Corrections' 'Managing Your Health in Prison' pamphlet.

Residential units

41. Whanganui Prison has the following residential units:
 - » Five high security residential units with a total of 241 beds.
 - » Four low-medium security units with a total of 260 beds.
 - » Two minimum security Self Care Units (one inside the prison perimeter and one outside) with 20 beds each.
 - » An Intervention and Support Unit for prisoners assessed as being at risk of self-harm.
 - » A Separates Unit for prisoners sentenced to cell confinement following a disciplinary hearing.
42. New Plymouth Remand Centre is located at the New Plymouth Police Station and can house up to 24 prisoners.

First days in custody

Inductions

43. When a prisoner arrives in a unit he should receive an induction and have unit rules and routines explained to him. He should also be given access to a self-service kiosk, allowing him to access information and request support.⁵ Inductions should be completed within 24 hours of a prisoner's arrival in a unit, and within 72 hours of arrival in prison.
44. Of the prisoners we interviewed in high security units, all said they had been interviewed and received induction information that allowed them to understand rules and routines. We reviewed induction paperwork in the units and found that it gave good information about unit rules and routines. We also observed two inductions. One was at the New Plymouth Remand Centre and was reasonably thorough. The other was in Whakapakari, a high security unit. The prisoner had been in the unit before. Staff gave him an initial induction and said they would complete a full induction later in the day.
45. In low-medium and Self Care Units, most of the prisoners we interviewed were satisfied with the inductions they received, saying they felt well informed about unit rules and routines. The two prisoners from Whanui (Te Tirohanga Māori Focus and Drug Treatment unit) said they received mihi whakatau (ceremonial welcomes) when they arrived (see Image 1). The unit's Principal Corrections Officer said he met each prisoner personally on arrival.
46. 9 (2) (a)
47. Another prisoner in the same unit experienced English language barriers. The Department of Corrections prisoner database recorded that this prisoner received a unit induction. However, when we interviewed him, with the assistance of a staff member, he was unable to understand or respond to simple questions about unit routines. Staff told us he had been in prison for a long time and understood how it operated, though explaining changes was difficult. His prisoner file showed he had been at Whanganui Prison 9 (2) (a) and had not had an interpreter during that time. Staff told us they had engaged a volunteer to visit weekly and teach the prisoner English.

⁵ Prisoners can use the kiosks to access a range of information including legislation and policies, prison rules, and key dates in their sentences. They can also order food and other items from prison canteens, ask for meetings with their case manager or their unit's principal corrections officer, and check the balance of their prison trust account (all prisoners have a trust account that family and friends can make deposits into and prisoners can use to buy canteen items).

48. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that unit inductions would be monitored by residential managers to improve performance. Also, Corrections has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Internal Affairs, signed at the end of 2018, to enable all prisons and Community Corrections sites to access the interpreter service through an 0800 number.

Initial telephone calls

49. On arrival in prison, new prisoners are entitled to make a telephone call to inform their families they are in prison and make any necessary arrangements. If this telephone call does not occur in the Receiving Office it must be provided in the residential unit. One prisoner in the Assessment Unit said he had to wait almost a week for his telephone call.

Findings

- Finding 4. Prisoners in high security units received induction interviews and information after arriving in their residential units to help them understand rules and routines.
- Finding 5. Most prisoners in low-medium and minimum security units received induction information on arrival in their unit. While prisoners were generally satisfied with the information they received, in a small number of cases the inductions were cursory or were not provided in a language that the prisoner could understand.

High security units

50. Whanganui Prison has five high security residential units: Assessment (44 beds), Te Moenga (52 beds), Te Waimarie (55 beds), Whakapakari (42 beds) and Whakaritia (48 beds). Assessment and Whakaritia housed mainly remand accused prisoners, but also some remand convicted and sentenced prisoners. The other units housed mainly sentenced prisoners with some remand accused and remand convicted.
51. Te Moenga was double bunked, as were a small number of cells in Assessment and Whakaritia. At the time of our inspection, double bunking had only recently been installed in Te Moenga.
52. At 31 July 2018, the high security residential units at Whanganui Prison housed a total of 215 prisoners – 129 on remand and 86 sentenced. Most of the units (other than Whakaritia) were operating at close to capacity.
53. Of the sentenced prisoners, 56 were classified as high security, 18 as low-medium, 15 as low, and five as minimum (two were unclassified). Those of low-medium, low and minimum security were being managed in a regime that was more restrictive than their security classifications required. One of the minimum security prisoners was disabled and was on a waiting list for the internal Self Care Unit.
54. Another five prisoners were held in the Intervention and Support Unit.

Environment and basic needs

Physical environment

55. From our observations, the high security units were generally well maintained, clean and free of graffiti. However, some prisoners and staff expressed several concerns about the physical environment:
- » Heating and ventilation: All five prisoners in the Assessment Unit raised concerns about their cells. They said the cells had very poor ventilation and became excessively hot both in

summer (despite air conditioning being turned on) and in winter (when the heating was on). Some said the poor ventilation meant the cells were smelly. Staff and prisoners in Whakaritia and Whakapakari expressed the same concerns – we were told that a staff member in Whakaritia had collapsed during summer due to heat exhaustion.

- » Showers and drainage: In Whakaritia, prisoners and staff told us showers on one landing had not worked for more than a month. We saw water leaking from showers into the cells below. Prisoners also complained that the shower temperature was difficult to control and could cause burns. Staff told us this reflected the age of the building and would be too costly to repair or replace. In one area of Whakaritia, eight prisoners shared one communal shower, which offered no privacy.
 - » Toilets: Toilets in the high security units were designed to be used without seats and lids. Three prisoners (one in Te Moenga and two in Whakaritia) objected to this, regarding it as unhygienic. One prisoner said it was like having an uncovered toilet in a bedroom. In Whakapakari, prisoners created makeshift toilet seats using cardboard covered with plastic bags (see Image 2). In Whakaritia, Whakapakari and Assessment some toilets were visible through the cell door grilles (see Image 3). Two prisoners from Whakaritia said this was a privacy issue. During our site inspection, we observed that the toilets in the Assessment Unit yards needed cleaning.
 - » Lighting: In Assessment, prisoners told us that lights in three cells turned on and off intermittently. They had responded by covering the lights with rubbish bags. The day after we were told this, the lights stopped working altogether. Three days later this issue had not been addressed.
 - » Noise from plumbing: Prisoners in Whakaritia told us they were disturbed by noisy pipes/plumbing. Flushing toilets created echoes which could wake prisoners.
56. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that the site would take steps to address the issues with showers, lights and toilets. During warmer temperatures, the site implemented a heat management plan which included providing fans in cells, summer clothing, cool water and cooling towels. External unit doors were opened after cells were locked to increase the air flow and wellness check were carried out by health staff who also monitored adverse reactions to the heat.

Clothing and bedding

57. Most of the prisoners we interviewed said their clothing and bedding was adequate or good. Four prisoners raised minor concerns (such as clothing being too large or old).

Food

58. Food for the residential units is prepared in the prison kitchen according to Department of Corrections' national menus. Most prisoners had no concerns about the food, and some were very positive about it. Three prisoners said the diet had too many carbohydrates (potatoes and bread) and was not healthy. Under the standard national menu, male prisoners are given 77 slices of bread per week as toast, sandwiches or buttered bread.

Finding

- Finding 6. In general the high security units provided a safe physical environment in which prisoners' needs were met. Ventilation was poor in some units, making them too hot at times. Some showers and lights were not working. In some cells the toilets could be seen through the cell door grille.

Safety and humane treatment

Gang influence

59. Of the 225 prisoners in high security units as at 31 July 2018, 104 were identified as having gang affiliations. This included more than half the prisoners in Assessment, Whakapakari and Whakaritia, and almost half in Te Moenga. The most common gangs were Mongrel Mob (34.9% of the prison's gang population) and Black Power (26.9%). Of the 379 prisoners who identified as gang members, 333 were housed in the prison's high security units.
60. Among the prisoners we interviewed, those in Te Moenga, Te Waimarie and Whakapakari were aware of gang members in their units but said there were no issues or tensions. In Assessment and Whakaritia, four of the six prisoners interviewed said gangs had significant influence and were responsible for standovers or violence against other prisoners. One said gang members tried to intimidate staff to win favours including extra telephone time. Another said gang influence was huge: gang members intimidated others, but also at times looked after other prisoners. Prisoners told us staff did their best to ensure that gang members could not intimidate or influence others.
61. After the recent shooting of a gang member in the community, the prison managed gang tensions in the high security units by keeping members of rival gangs on separate unlock regimes.

Active management and supervision

62. Staff were active and visible within high security units, and communicated well with prisoners. Prisoners told us staff were approachable and offered assistance when needed, and we saw several examples of this when staff responded to prisoners experiencing grief, mental distress, and health issues, and responded quickly to prisoners sparring in one unit.
63. Whakapakari and Assessment operate multiple unlock regimes and share a single corridor providing access to the exercise yards. As a result, staff spent much of their time completing movements to and from the yards. When other movements are required (such as to Health Centre appointments), additional pressure is placed on staff. Prisoners told us staff were not always visible when they were in the exercise yards, and were not always able to respond quickly to requests for assistance. However, they recognised this was a reflection of staff workloads. Some prisoners in Whakaritia said their unit's Principal Corrections Officer sometimes spent time in the yards to supervise and engage with them.

Access to contraband

64. Prisoners in most of the units told us there was little contraband (such as drugs, alcohol, tobacco, tattoo equipment and cellphones) in their units. Staff said they were proactive in controlling contraband and prisoners confirmed this. However, one prisoner in Te Waimarie said contraband was easy to obtain – he had recently been caught smoking cannabis. During our site visit a shank was discovered in a vacated cell in Assessment.
65. Prisoners were subjected to rub-down searches whenever they left or returned to their units, including on visits to the yards. We witnessed more than 50 rub-down searches during our site visit. In Assessment and Whakapakari, staff were under pressure to move prisoners quickly through the shared corridor and into the yards. The rub-down searches were rushed and not thorough. In other parts of the prison, rub-down searches were reasonably thorough except, in most cases, prisoners were not asked to remove their shoes and socks.
66. Prisoners' cells were checked daily and searched at random. Prisoners told us cells were left in a tidy state after searches. We observed a cell search by the detector dog team in one of the units. The search was thorough and the cells were left in a good state.

67. Prisoners told us strip searches were conducted on leaving or returning to the prison and were conducted in a respectful and professional manner. Strip searches were carried out at other times if there were reasonable grounds to do so.
68. The prison has an intelligence team which informs staff in residential units if it obtains information about contraband entering the prison. At the time of our inspection the prison did not have a detector dog handler and nor did it have a Site Emergency Response Team, both of which would assist with conducting searches and detecting contraband. At times dog handlers were brought in from other prisons, or the former dog handler (who had taken up another position within Corrections) made himself available to conduct drug dog searches. Staff told us the dog handler will be replaced and a Site Emergency Response Team established in 2019.
69. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that a reminder would be sent out about the expected standard of rub-down searches. Residential managers would be required to provide assurance to the Prison Director that rub-down searches were consistently being conducted to an appropriate standard.

Violence and intimidation

70. Prisoners in Te Moenga, Te Waimarie and Whakapakari all felt safe in their units and said there was little incidence of violence or intimidation. However, one said he had been attacked and hospitalised a month previously. Another said standovers occasionally occurred, but prisoners were okay if they stood up for themselves.
71. In Whakaritia and Assessment, prisoners and staff said there were risks of violence arising from tensions between gangs. The units managed this by keeping rival gangs in different landings and managing them on separate unlock regimes. While labour intensive, this generally removed opportunities for violence.
72. Prisoners in Assessment told us that on one recent occasion there had been a fight when staff had unlocked a prisoner while those on another regime were also unlocked. Staff responded quickly and then reviewed procedures to ensure it could not occur again.
73. Prisoners in those units said prisoners were sometimes pressured to hand over meals, telephone cards and canteen items. In particular, newer prisoners and those without a gang affiliation were vulnerable to this. Pressure or standovers mainly occurred in the yards if no staff were present.
74. In Whakaritia, we interviewed one prisoner who had not spent any time in the exercise yards for some weeks because he feared he would get into fights. As a result, the prisoner told us he felt depressed. We informed the unit Principal Corrections Officer who addressed this by arranging for the prisoner to spend time in a small yard without having contact with other prisoners.
75. During the six months to 31 July 2018, 29 violent incidents were recorded in the high security units (including the Intervention and Support Unit). None were classified as serious.⁶ Of these incidents, 11 were in Te Moenga, six in Te Waimarie and five in Whakaritia.

The prison's response to incidents

76. Prisoners told us staff responded quickly and effectively to any incidents that occurred in their units, and this was confirmed by our observations during our site visit.

⁶ All were classified as non-serious or no injury. Serious violent incidents are those that require hospitalisation. Non-serious incidents require medical treatment but not hospitalisation. No injury incidents are those that do not require treatment.

Findings

- Finding 7. Staff generally managed gang tensions effectively under challenging circumstances, keeping prisoners from rival factions apart. In spite of these challenges, prisoners in the high security units were generally kept safe from violence and intimidation.
- Finding 8. Staff were active in their units, communicated effectively with prisoners, and were generally vigilant at detecting contraband, though rub-down searches in some units were not adequate to detect items concealed in prisoners' clothing.

Rehabilitation

77. As well as detaining prisoners in a safe and humane manner, prisons are expected to support prisoners to make positive changes in their lives. All New Zealand prisons offer programmes aimed at supporting prisoners to address the causes of offending and acquire skills that will help them after release. Case managers work with prisoners to create plans for rehabilitation and reintegration, and case officers work with prisoners in their units to keep track of progress. Successful rehabilitation depends on a prisoner's motivation and on access to support and opportunities to make positive changes.

Case management

78. The prison had 18 FTE case management staff comprising 16 case managers, one programme scheduler and one guided release manager. One case manager position was vacant and another case manager was due to go on leave. Each case manager was responsible for 40-45 prisoners. Case managers meet prisoners early in their sentence to develop an offender plan. How often they meet thereafter depends on the prisoner's needs – high risk prisoners with complex needs are seen more often, as are those approaching parole and release dates.
79. Case managers said they aimed for all prisoners to be seen at least once every month, though that was not always possible with their caseloads. Remand prisoners and those on life sentences were seen only about once every six months. At the time of our inspection, 31 prisoners were not allocated to a case manager.
80. The Principal Case Manager told us that places on programmes were prioritised taking into account the prisoner's motivation, how close he was to parole or release, and other factors such as ensuring a safe mix of prisoners. He said the prison was focused on addressing the needs of short-term prisoners, and ensuring that prisoners could complete rehabilitation programmes before their first parole hearing. To support this, case management sometimes asked custodial staff to review security classifications if a lower classification would make a prisoner eligible for a programme. Case managers also encouraged prisoners to transfer prisons if necessary to complete programmes.
81. The Principal Case Manager said the peak in the national prison population earlier in 2018 had caused issues for the case management team. A prisoner would arrive, meet a case manager who would start developing an offender plan, and then be transferred due to muster pressures.

Time out of cell

82. All of the high security units operated an 8am to 5pm staffing roster. Unlock regimes differed from unit to unit, with some operating multiple unlock regimes to keep prisoners of different categories and gang affiliations apart.
83. Each of the units had several exercise yards, allowing them to keep prisoners apart while still providing time out of cell. In most units prisoners had four to six hours out of their cells each day.

Industry, treatment and learning

84. On arrival in prison, every prisoner receives an education assessment to determine their literacy and numeracy learning needs. This is followed by a learning pathway discussion which identifies recommended programmes to help the prisoner meet his learning needs and goals. The prison aims to complete education assessments within two weeks of a prisoner's arrival. At 31 July 2018, 92 prisoners were waitlisted for their initial education assessment.
85. The prison employs two education tutors and offers a range of education programmes, delivered by contracted providers, including literacy and numeracy, tikanga and te reo Māori, driver licence training and the Brainwave (parenting) programme. Prisoners are also offered a range of courses provided by volunteers including creative writing, drawing and sketching, guitar, song writing, kapa haka, raranga (flax weaving), yoga, first aid and fire safety.
86. Education tutors told us they needed at least one more FTE tutor, as well as administrative support, to keep up with demand. Two FTE tutors was not enough for a facility with up to 557 prisoners. A lot of time was spent on administration, especially checking to determine which prisoners needed education assessments.
87. Prisoners from high security units had limited engagement with learning programmes. Between 24 and 28 September 2018, prisoners in the high security units attended Intensive Literacy and Numeracy programmes (29 prisoners), sketching (5), education assessment (4), raranga flax weaving (1), yoga (2), learner pathway (3) and literacy and numeracy foundation skills (3).⁷ At the time of our inspection, the high security units housed more than 200 prisoners.
88. Most learning programmes had waiting lists. Across the prison, 57 prisoners were on the waiting list for Secure Online Learning programmes (see Image 4),⁸ 51 for tikanga Māori, 44 for Intensive Literacy and Numeracy, 41 for driver licence training, and smaller numbers for other programmes.
89. High security prisoners can also work in their units in roles such as cleaning, painting, laundry and kit locker. Most units had around eight prisoners in these roles. Te Waimarie offered work in a programme making reusable supermarket bags from old curtains. By the time of our site visit, the prisoners had made more than 5,000 bags.
90. Prisoners in high security could also work in the prison's small motors workshop (see Image 5), where they learned to service and repair lawn mowers, line trimmers and other equipment with small petrol engines for the prison and for lower North Island Community Corrections offices. Engaged prisoners could receive an NZQA approved qualification.
91. The prison also offers a range of treatment and rehabilitation programmes. Prisoners in the high security units were able to take part in the Short Motivational Programme and the six-week Short Rehabilitation Programme.
92. Most of the prisoners interviewed were on remand and were ineligible for treatment programmes. Among those who were sentenced, few were engaged in any form of learning programme.
93. Prisoners acknowledged that the range of programmes had increased in recent months, particularly courses run by volunteers, and expressed appreciation for this. Staff told us they had made considerable effort to ensure that remand and high security sentenced prisoners had opportunities for constructive activities. Staff told us they would like to see more rehabilitation programmes offered for high security sentenced prisoners.

⁷ Prisoners may have attended the programme more than once during the week.

⁸ Secure Online Learning is a suite of computers that give prison-based learners the opportunity to develop digital literacy skills. Each suite has some pre-approved applications and websites in a secure, controlled and monitored learning environment.

Physical exercise

94. The prison has a large gym (see Images 6 and 7) with a range of weights and cardio equipment. Prisoners in all the high security residential units had regular access to the gym and daily access to common rooms and exercise yards.
95. An Activity Officer runs gym sessions and visits the units and other areas of the prison to organise sports and exercise opportunities. For example, the Activity Officer told us he provided equipment for laundry workers so they could work out while waiting for washing to be completed, as they did not have time during the day to visit the gym.
96. Among the prisoners we interviewed, most had no concerns about access to exercise. Two prisoners from Whakaritita said they received limited gym time. They said the unit (with 48 beds) was allocated enough gym time for 18 prisoners a week. In all, during the week of our site visit, the number of prisoners using the gym each day ranged from 129 to 166.
97. Some prisoners said the gym and exercise yards could do with more equipment. The Activity Officer told us he tried to meet the demand for more exercise equipment by making his own (for example home-made slam balls and kettle bells).

Library

98. The prison has a main library which provides books to units (see Image 8). Te Waimarie has its own mini library and New Plymouth Remand Centre has a shelf with library books.
99. Each unit (except the Intervention and Support Unit) has its own copy of a printed library catalogue, from which prisoners can make a written request for a book. Each prisoner is allowed up to three books at any one time.
100. The Librarian told us the library was close to capacity and would need a larger space if the collection was to expand. She said there were sometimes problems with books not being returned before prisoners transferred to other units or prisons.

Other constructive activity

101. As noted, high security prisoners had limited access to treatment programmes but appreciated the opportunities they had to exercise and take part in volunteer programmes. Otherwise, prisoners told us they spent their spare time reading, watching TV, and interacting with others.

Contact with family and friends

102. Whanganui Prison has two visits rooms, each containing a family visit room and three non-contact booths. One of the rooms has an outdoor visits area but this is not used for security reasons. One of the rooms has children's areas with televisions but no toys.
103. We observed two visits sessions and prisoners were allowed to hold their children. We also spoke with visitors who were generally positive about the experience. One family said they had to drive a long distance to visit. Another said she did not bring children because there was nowhere suitable for them to play.
104. Among the prisoners we interviewed, most received visitors and were positive about how visits were managed. Prisoners said staff were present but not overbearing, and visitors were treated well. Some prisoners did not receive visits, either because their families were too far away or for other reasons. One prisoner did not know he could arrange online visits using the AVL suite.
105. Prisoners expressed few concerns about access to telephones for calling families. Two of the prisoners we interviewed said evening lockup times prevented them from calling their families when their children were home.

106. Four prisoners (from Assessment and Whakaritia) said staff remained with them while they were making legal calls, and staff confirmed this. The Prison Director had previously sent a reminder to staff about prisoners' right to confidentiality for legal calls. This was circulated again to staff during our inspection.

Findings

- Finding 9. Even though some high security units operated multiple unlock regimes, most prisoners were able to spend about four to six hours per day out of their cells.
- Finding 10. Rehabilitation opportunities were limited for high security prisoners, but the prison offered education and work opportunities, and an increased range of volunteer run programmes and activities. Prisoners had good access to the gym and exercise opportunities, and reasonable access to library books. Prisoners were appreciative of these opportunities and as a result were less likely to get bored or frustrated than they otherwise might. The prison had made an effort to increase industry, treatment and learning opportunities for remand and high security sentenced prisoners.

New Plymouth Remand Centre

107. The New Plymouth Remand Centre is a high security facility located on the top floor of the New Plymouth Police Station. It opened in 2013 to house male and female prisoners who are due to appear in New Plymouth courts or who have short remand periods.
108. The Remand Centre can house up to 24 prisoners in double bunked cells. At 31 July 2018, it held 11 male prisoners (two sentenced and nine on remand). Prisoners are often moved to the prison at weekends. When women are present, they are held in a block separate from men.
109. Whanganui Prison's Operations and Movements Manager said that maintaining adequate staffing levels was an ongoing challenge at the Remand Centre.

Environment and basic needs

110. The Remand Centre was well maintained with no visible graffiti. It has four pods (each with three cells) (see Image 9), a small communal area, two small exercise yards, and a staff base from which there is good line of sight into the yards, but no line of sight into the communal areas.
111. On the ground floor of the Police Station there is a reception area and a health room (both shared with Police) and an At Risk cell. There is limited line of sight from the reception area into the At Risk cell, though the cell is monitored using CCTV. Prisoners in that cell can see into the reception area where Police process people they have arrested.
112. The room used for strip searches is very small and not fit for purpose. It is located in a thoroughfare and people moving past may be able to see into the room.
113. Prisoners told us the air conditioning was noisy and too hot, and staff confirmed this and said requests had been made for it to be addressed. Staff said the remand centre got very hot during summer.
114. We interviewed two prisoners who both told us that their bedding and clothing were adequate.
115. Meals are cooked at Whanganui Prison, then frozen and transported to the remand centre.
116. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that there was no separate strip search area at the Remand Centre. Privacy was ensured by blocking the view through the door. Alternative approaches had been explored, but the current practice was best suited to the facility's layout.

Safety and human treatment

117. Two prisoners told us staff were visible in the Remand Centre and dealt with any issues prisoners raised. We observed staff interacting on a regular basis with the prisoners. There was an obvious level of mutual respect and good humour.
118. The prisoners said gang members were present but caused no issues. They said there was little, if any, contraband. They also said they had neither witnessed nor been subject to any violence or intimidation. During our observations we saw no evidence of violence or intimidation. In the six months to 31 July 2018, only one violent incident was recorded. It was classified as 'no injury'.
119. We assessed a strip search and several rub-down searches. All were conducted in a professional manner and were sufficiently thorough to detect concealed items. Prisoners said they had no concerns about the manner in which searches were conducted.

Rehabilitation

120. Prisoners said they were out of their cells for five or six hours each day. At the time of our inspection no industry, treatment or learning programmes were offered. Most prisoners stayed for only a short time and would be unable to complete programmes.
121. The Remand Centre did not have a gym. Weights were available in the communal area, and prisoners had access to the yards for exercise (though these were very small). Both the prisoners we interviewed said they enjoyed exercise and would appreciate more weight training equipment.
122. The Remand Centre has a small library where prisoners can obtain reading material. Prisoners could also play board games and had access to newspapers.
123. Legal visits were allowed, but not visits from friends and family. Prisoners who want visits from family or friends are transferred to Whanganui Prison where they can use the visits centre. One prisoner said this was too far for his family to travel.
124. Each of the Remand Centre's communal areas had a telephone, and prisoners said there were no difficulties with access.

Findings

- Finding 11. The New Plymouth Remand Centre provided a safe and secure environment in which prisoners were generally kept safe and their basic needs were met. Prisoners had several hours out of their cells each day and enjoyed opportunities to exercise.
- Finding 12. Because most prisoners stayed for only a short time, they were not offered industry, treatment and learning programmes.
- Finding 13. The room used for strip searches is very small and not fit for purpose. Additionally, prisoners told us the air conditioning was noisy and too hot, particularly in summer.
- Finding 14. The Remand Centre did not have a visits centre which meant opportunities to maintain contact with family and friends were limited.

Low-medium security units

125. The prison has four low-medium security units:

- » Southwood (80 beds) – a mainstream unit housing mainly sentenced prisoners with some remand convicted.
- » Te Whakataa 1 (60 beds) – a harmony unit⁹ housing only sentenced prisoners.
- » Te Whakataa 2 (60 beds) – a mainstream unit housing mainly sentenced prisoners with some remand convicted.
- » Whanui (60 beds) – a specialist Te Tirohanga Māori/Drug Treatment Unit co-locating a Tikanga Māori (Māori customs and values) Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme and the Drug Treatment Programme.

126. At 31 July 2018, Te Whakataa 1 and Whanui were full, and Te Whakataa 2 was close to capacity. Altogether, the units housed 244 prisoners (229 sentenced and 15 remand). Of the sentenced prisoners, 79 were classified as low-medium security, 74 as low, and 71 as minimum.

Environment and basic needs

Physical environment

127. Each of the low-medium security units are comprised of cells and other facilities (staff hubs, dining and recreation rooms, gym, library, laundry, kit locker, bathrooms) arranged around a central compound, which is part grass and part concrete. Te Whakataa 1 and 2 adjoin each other, sharing a single staff and administrative area. All units offer wheelchair access.
128. Whanui Unit was generally well maintained. Some parts of Southwood (exterior) and Te Whakataa (interior) were in need of maintenance. In Te Whakataa 2, three showers were in poor condition with peeling paint (see Image 10), and the prison had no plans to upgrade them.
129. Based on our observations and on prisoner interviews, the cells in all low-medium units were warm, clean and free of graffiti (see Image 11). Staff in Whanui awarded certificates to prisoners with the cleanest cells.

Clothing and bedding

130. Prisoners in the low-medium units said their clothing was suitable and they could get replacements when needed.
131. During our site visit, prisoners from Te Whakataa 2 gave us a letter saying they were short of clothing (the unit's clothing was stored in Te Whakataa 1), and that much of it was old and worn out. The unit's Principal Corrections Officer acknowledged that much of the clothing was old but said this was unavoidable and occurred in all prisons.
132. Each unit had its own laundry. In most units prisoners could wash their own clothing, while larger items were sent to the main prison laundry. However, in Te Whakataa 2 the laundry was not used. Personal clothing was washed in Te Whakataa 1 and other clothing, towels and bedding were sent to the main laundry.
133. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that a review of clothing stock would be carried out to ensure it was of an acceptable quality.

⁹ To enter a harmony unit, prisoners must sign an agreement stating they will live in harmony with others and abstain from drugs, violence and intimidation, and any activity that interferes with the unit's harmonious atmosphere and smooth running.

Food

134. Of the eight prisoners we interviewed in low-medium units, two were not satisfied with the meals and the others were satisfied.
135. As well as prison meals, prisoners can order snacks such as soups and noodles from the prison canteen service. Prisoners in Whanui had access to toasted sandwich makers and a microwave, and to hot water for drinks and snacks.

Showers

136. Staff in Whanui told us showers in the unit were not hot enough in winter. Prisoners in Te Whakataa 1 told us the shower water temperature was variable and two prisoners said it could sometimes be hot enough to cause burns.

Finding

Finding 15. The low-medium security units were well maintained and mostly free of graffiti. The units generally met prisoners' needs for food, water and bedding, although clothing was old and worn out.

Safety and humane treatment*Gang influence*

137. Of the 244 prisoners in the low-medium units, 124 identified as having gang associations (46 in Whanui, 39 in Southwood, 37 in Te Whakataa 2 and two in the harmony unit Te Whakataa 1). The most common were Black Power (31.5% of those identified as gang members) and Mongrel Mob (30%). Others included Nomads (10.0%) and Head Hunters (8.9%). Among the prisoners we interviewed, most were aware of gang members in their units but said there was little gang influence or tension. We saw no gang paraphernalia or tagging in units. The exception was Te Whakataa 2 where some prisoners spoke of tensions and fights sometimes occurring among rival gangs. One long-serving prisoner regularly intervened between rival factions to keep the peace (this was confirmed by prisoners, staff and incident reports). Staff told us they sometimes communicated rule and routine changes by informing influential gang members.
138. The prison's Security Manager told us a Gang Engagement Plan was being developed to support implementation of the Department of Corrections Gang Strategy, which aims to contain gangs' influence, disrupt their ability to organise and commit crimes, and reduce the harm they cause.

Active management and supervision

139. During our inspection we saw staff in all low-medium security units actively engaging with prisoners. Those interactions seemed to be positive. Prisoners told us staff were highly visible in their units, and could be approached to discuss any issues or concerns. The exception was Te Whakataa 2, where some prisoners said concerns they raised were not addressed.
140. 9 (2) (a) [REDACTED] The prisoner has a management plan in accordance with the Department of Corrections transgender policy.

Access to contraband

141. Staff told us items of contraband (such as drugs, tobacco and tattoo equipment) were available in the prison, and Intelligence staff said some prisoners were making money from its sale. Prisoners acknowledged that contraband was present but said it was not in large quantities.
142. Staff in Whanui said contraband was occasionally introduced by visitors coming to watch prisoners' Te Tirohanga Programme graduation ceremonies. Prisoners, in the past, had been removed from the programme for that reason.
143. Prisoners in Whanui told us they were subjected to rub-down searches whenever they entered or left a residential unit. They also told us cells were checked daily and searched at random. Rub-down searches in Whanui were thorough and included checks of shoes and socks. We also observed rub-down searches in Te Whakataa 1 and 2. Prisoners there were not asked to open their mouths or remove their shoes and socks. The searches were otherwise reasonably thorough.
144. Prisoners said strip searches were not routinely conducted (except in circumstances required by the Corrections Act, such as reception to prison). When strip searches were conducted they were completed in a respectful and professional manner.
145. In the six months to 31 July 2018, 39 contraband incidents were detected in the low-medium units (21 in Southwood, 14 in Te Whakataa 1 and 2, and four in Whanui).

Violence and intimidation

146. Among the prisoners we interviewed, all felt safe in their units.
147. Those in the low-medium units said there were occasional fights or standovers. In Te Whakataa 1, shortly before our site visit, a prisoner had stabbed another with a fork. The perpetrator was removed from the unit and faced charges. Prisoners said incidents such as this were rare.
148. In Te Whakataa 2 prisoners told us that fights and standovers sometimes occurred, particularly when new young prisoner arrived in the unit and wanted to make a name for himself. Shortly before our site visit a prisoner had intervened to settle one such fight.
149. While in Te Whakataa 1 we spoke with three prisoners who had child sex convictions. They said they avoided rehabilitation programmes where they would be mixed with prisoners from other units, as they were often targeted and intimidated. Staff confirmed that the prisoners refused programmes for this reason.
150. 9 (2) (a) [REDACTED]
151. In Whanui, prisoners had no concerns about fights or intimidation, with one saying it was a family-oriented unit. Staff told us incidents were rare and typically minor. Staff advised that recently the unit had one incident in which a prisoner received a minor facial injury during his first night in the unit. When spoken to by staff the prisoner refused to say how it occurred.
152. Staff in the low-medium units said they involved influential prisoners when necessary to resolve tensions in their units.
153. In the six months to 31 July 2018, four violent incidents were recorded in the low-medium units – two each in Southwood and Whakataa 2. None was classified as serious (i.e. requiring hospitalisation).

Finding

Finding 16. Prisoners in the low-medium security units were generally safe from violence and intimidation. Fights and standovers sometimes occurred but were not common.

Rehabilitation

Time out of cell

154. Prisoners in Te Whakataa 1 and 2 were typically out of their cells for about six to eight hours per day, or longer if they worked in the kitchens or general mess (dining area). Prisoners in Whanui and Southwood had longer unlock times due to their attendance at programmes and work – about 12 hours per day for time out of cell in Whanui and 10-11 hours per day in Southwood. Unlock hours were reduced at weekends.

Treatment and learning programmes

155. As noted earlier, the prison offered a range of industry, treatment and learning programmes, including the Short Motivational Programme,¹⁰ Short Rehabilitation Programme, Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme,¹¹ and the Drug Treatment Programme. Te Tirohanga offered a three-stage rehabilitation pathway involving tikanga Māori, offence-focused rehabilitation, and access to the intensive Drug Treatment Programme for those who require it. Maintenance/alcohol and other drug after-care programmes were also offered. Family violence and alcohol and other drug brief interventions had been discontinued.
156. Rehabilitation programmes were available only for sentenced prisoners, and (aside from the Short Rehabilitation Programme) were only offered in low-medium and minimum security units. Eligibility depended on a range of factors, including age, security classification, risk of reoffending and reimprisonment,¹² health needs, and the nature of the prisoner's offending and sentence. If prisoners were eligible, opportunities depended on programme availability.
157. As noted earlier, the prison offered a range of opportunities for work either in units or in prison industries, and for education and industry training. These included Secure Online Learning and self-directed learning with tertiary education providers.
158. Of the prisoners we interviewed, all had case managers and offender plans in place. Almost all had regular interaction with their case manager and felt they were making progress towards parole or release. Almost all were completing rehabilitation programmes or had already completed the programmes on their plan. Some also worked in their units or in prison industries such as the concrete or timber yards. Several were completing education programmes.
159. A prisoner who experienced English language barriers was not completing programmes and was unable to answer questions about his offender plan. As noted earlier, staff had arranged English tutoring for him. 9 (2) (a)
160. At the time of our inspection, 20 lower security prisoners were engaged in the Te Tirohanga rehabilitation pathway and 36 in the Drug Treatment Programme. In addition, eight were attending a Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme, and one was attending a Short

¹⁰ This programme is aimed at motivating prisoners to address the causes and consequences of their offending.

¹¹ These programmes are aimed at helping prisoners to understand and address the causes of offending.

¹² Risk of conviction and reimprisonment is measured using an index known as Roc*RoI (Risk of conviction x risk of imprisonment).

Motivational Programme. Across the prison as a whole, 91 prisoners were scheduled to access rehabilitation programmes. Of those, 40 were waiting for maintenance programmes. Otherwise the largest waiting lists were for the Short Motivational Programme (19) and Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme (17).

161. Prisoners from the low-medium and minimum security units were also engaged in a range of education opportunities. At the time of our inspection, 28 low security prisoners were engaged in Secure Online Learning opportunities, seven in guitar, six in literacy and numeracy, five in raranga (weaving) and four in yoga. Prisoners also completed Tikanga Māori learning programmes as part of the Te Tirohanga rehabilitation pathway. As noted earlier, some of these programmes had waiting lists.

Industry

162. Whanganui Prison offered work in its kitchen, laundry, nursery, grounds maintenance and painting/asset maintenance teams, timber yards, joinery workshop and concrete block plant. In the week starting 30 July 2018, a total of 167 prisoners were working – most of them from low-medium security units and internal Self Care. In each of the low-medium security units, a significant proportion of prisoners worked.
163. The concrete, timber and construction industries supply customers from outside the prison. Staff told us the concrete block plant was unable to keep up with demand from its customers.
164. The prison piloted a wrap-around programme, PuraPura Whakatō O Te Huringa (Planting seeds of change) aimed at engaging Māori men aged under 25 in rehabilitation and training opportunities. The prison's Industries Manager said young men were not always motivated to complete programmes. The wrap-around programme resolved that by bringing together opportunities for industry training and work skills, creative activities, and sport and recreation in a single 32-week programme. This meant the men always had something to look forward to and did not get bored. The programme would likely run over a shorter duration in future.
165. The wrap-around programme was only available to young prisoners in low-medium units. Of 10 prisoners who started the programme, four were due to graduate. Of the others, two were released, one was transferred to the external Self Care Unit and got a job with a private employer, and one obtained several qualifications before transferring to another prison to complete a rehabilitation programme. Only one returned to a high security unit without graduating.

Physical exercise and other constructive activities

166. The site has a large gym which is only used by prisoners in the high security units. The low-medium security units and minimum security units have their own exercise rooms. In the low-medium security units these had cardio and weight equipment. In most units the equipment was in need of maintenance, and prisoners did not think there was enough equipment. In the Self Care Units, much of the gym equipment was home-made and in poor condition.
167. Each of the low-medium security units has a compound with a small field and a concrete court, allowing prisoners to play outdoor sports. Units also have recreation or activities rooms with table tennis and pool tables, and some units have music rooms.
168. Te Whakataa 1 and 2 share a mini library. Southwood and Te Waimarie also have mini libraries. Three of the units (Southwood and Te Whakataa 1 and 2) have occasionally arranged to bring interested prisoners to browse in the main library. Otherwise prisoners can access books by making requests to the main library.
169. Prisoners told us they could also spend time playing cards or board games, reading, and playing music. None of the prisoners we interviewed raised any concerns about access to exercise or other constructive activities.

Contact with family and friends

170. Visits for low-medium security units were scheduled for two or three days a week. Most of the prisoners in these units received visitors, and none had any concerns with how visits were managed. Nor did prisoners express any concerns about telephone access in their units.
171. When prisoners graduate from one of the phases of Te Tirohanga or the Drug Treatment Programme, a graduation ceremony is held. Prisoners can each invite two visitors who must be approved in advance. The day includes a powhiri (welcome), graduation, haka, and kai (a shared meal). We observed one ceremony in which prisoners showed considerable pride in what they had achieved. One prisoner welcomed his parents who had driven a considerable distance to see him graduate.

Findings

- Finding 17. The prison offered a good range of rehabilitation programmes, and opportunities for learning, training and work, to sentenced prisoners in low-medium security units. A large proportion of prisoners were engaged in these activities. Prisoners were also supported to use their time constructively in other ways, including exercise, and to maintain contact with families.
- Finding 18. The wrap-around pilot programme for young Māori men was innovative and was showing signs of success at engaging prisoners in training and rehabilitation opportunities.

Self Care Units

172. The prison also has two minimum security Self Care Units where prisoners live in a flatting-style environment. Self Care Units support prisoners to acquire practical and social skills they need to integrate back into the community. The units were:
- » Te Whare Manaaki (20 beds in five villas) located inside the prison perimeter.
 - » Te Ohorere (20 beds in five villas (see Image 12)) located outside the perimeter.
173. At 31 July 2018, Te Whare Manaaki was full and Te Ohorere had one spare bed. The units housed only sentenced prisoners – 34 of minimum security classification and five low security. Eighteen prisoners were waitlisted for internal Self Care and 12 for external Self Care.

Environment and basic needs

174. Prisoners could wear their own clothing and had access to hot water and showers in their villas. Prisoners were also responsible for their own laundry and for keeping their villas clean. The villas we observed were clean, tidy, well maintained and free of graffiti. Te Whare Manaaki had well-kept gardens. Prisoners had no concerns about bedding or towels.
175. In Te Ohorere, prisoners were given a weekly budget and could shop and prepare their own food. For prisoners in Te Whare Manaaki, meals were prepared in the prison's kitchen. Two prisoners from Te Whare Manaaki were unhappy that they were not escorted to the supermarket to buy their own food, as is usual practice for Self Care Units. Prisoners and staff told us supermarket shopping had been discontinued about two years previously after prisoners were caught smuggling contraband into the prison. The Prison Director said the situation had been discussed among prison management but there were no immediate plans to resume prisoners' shopping days.

176. One prisoner told us he had turned down opportunities to transfer from a low-medium unit to Te Whare Manaaki, because it would not offer him opportunities to develop life skills such as budgeting, shopping, and cooking as Self Care Units in other prisons did.
177. Following the inspection, the National Commissioner advised that Te Whare Manaaki was a hybrid of Te Tirohanga and the self care concept of communal living. Therefore, not all prisoners were suitable or ready for shopping activities. It was used as a stepping stone to the external Self Care Unit.

Safety and humane treatment

178. Prisoners told us there was no violence or intimidation in the Self Care Units and everyone felt safe. Of the 39 prisoners in the units, 13 identified as gang members. Prisoners told us gangs exerted little influence in these units and we did not see any gang paraphernalia or tagging.
179. Prisoners also told us there was little evidence of contraband in the units. One said there had been some issues in the past but staff had got that under control.
180. Prisoners were subjected to rub-down searches whenever they left or returned to the unit. A prisoner in the external Self Care Unit said he was sometimes strip searched after returning to the unit from external employment. The houses were also searched with a detector dog on random occasions. Prisoners said the searches were conducted in a professional manner.

Rehabilitation

181. Prisoners in Self Care Units were unlocked from their villas for more than 12 hours a day.
182. Of the three prisoners we interviewed in Self Care, two were preparing for release from prison and were engaged in Guided Release activities. The other was engaged in Secure Online Learning and worked in the prison's concrete workshop. He was waiting to complete a Drug Treatment Programme.
183. In the week beginning 24 September 2018, four prisoners from the internal Self Care Unit were engaged in the Alcohol and Other Drugs Aftercare Support programme, up to three were engaged in Secure Online Learning, and one worked in the prison library.
184. Prisoners in Te Ohore had typically completed all of the rehabilitation programmes on their offender plans. At the time of our site visit six of the prisoners worked as part of the Release to Work programme – two for private employers and the others in the prison's external grounds. Staff told us there was little for other prisoners to do. They could visit each other's villas but could not leave the unit's compound.
185. Each of the units has a shelf for library books. The prison librarian visits every three weeks with a trolley-load of new books. Internal Self Care has activities rooms with pool and table tennis tables and some gym equipment (much of it home-made).

Findings

- Finding 19. The Self Care Units were clean and well maintained. Prisoners were safe, with no evidence of violence or intimidation among prisoners.
- Finding 20. Prisoners had extensive unlock time and some were engaged in constructive activities such as employment outside the prison. Rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities were limited and some prisoners had Release to Work employment.
- Finding 21. Prisoners in internal Self Care were not able (due to security concerns) to manage their own budgeting and cooking.

Health and other services

Health

186. Prisons have a primary health care service that is required by Section 75 of the Corrections Act 2004 to provide health care that is *"reasonably necessary"* and the standard of that care must be *"reasonably equivalent to the standard of health care available to the public."*
187. Whanganui Prison's Health Centre is staffed by a Health Centre Manager, Team Leader, 13.7 FTE nurses and an administration officer. Other health services available include a medical officer, forensic psychiatrist and nurse, dentist, physiotherapist, two Improving Mental Health clinicians, package of care provider, podiatrist, occupational therapists, district nurses, continence nurses and diabetic nurse specialists.
188. Nurses work shifts between 6.30am and 9.30pm. All are registered and have completed or are scheduled to complete their core training professional development requirements.
189. Each day during the week of inspection the site was short of nursing staff due to sick or other unplanned leave. The site did not have the capacity to replace rostered nurses to backfill these shifts. This put considerable pressures on the remaining nursing staff and impacted on service delivery.
190. The New Plymouth Remand Centre has 1.5 FTE nurses. While their shifts varied from day to day, they were on site for most hours between 8am and 6.30pm. Prisoners from the remand centre can be referred to a local medical clinic or transferred to Whanganui Prison for medical and dental treatment.
191. After hours, a registered nurse is rostered on call, and a contracted doctor provides an on-call telephone service. Emergencies are managed by calling an ambulance and transferring the prisoner to Whanganui Hospital.
192. The prison has systems in place for assessing and planning for the prison population's health care needs. Clinical governance meetings were held every three months and involve health, mental health and custodial staff. Monthly staff Quality Forum meetings, which support and guide health staff to improve safety and quality, were not occurring.
193. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that nurse absences at the time of the inspection were due to an unusual number of staff movements and the time required to recruit suitable replacements. The resource model for nurses was being reviewed nationally.

Facilities

194. The Health Centre is comprised of three consultation rooms, two treatment rooms, a dental clinic, holding cells, utility rooms, a store room, offices, bathrooms and a meeting/lunch room.
195. The treatment room used by mental health clinicians is located in a busy corridor, and has no door – a curtain was hung across the doorway. This resulted in a lack of private space and people nearby were able to hear confidential conversations.
196. The centre has two holding cells. This restricted the number of prisoners who could be brought to the unit for clinics, and therefore hampered the efficient running of the unit.
197. The New Plymouth Remand Centre has one health clinic room which is shared with the Police doctor and also used for women's strip searches when required. The room is small and not well laid out.
198. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that a door and window would be added to create a private space for mental health and other consultations.

Nurse consultations

199. Prisoners (at both sites) can submit a health request form when they have a health concern and nurses triage these daily and action according to the urgency and/or seriousness of the health need.
200. Nurses at Whanganui Prison had different understandings about the health request process. Some nurses completed all necessary follow-up actions on the same day; others completed all urgent actions and scheduled non-urgent actions on the MedTech recall system. Each afternoon, nurses printed the list of recalls for the following day where the clinic nurse would complete the required interventions. The inconsistent approach of nurses in managing health request forms meant some patients were seen very quickly, while others had long waits.
201. Appointments for nurse consultations were not scheduled in an appointment book to indicate who was to be seen in future clinics. The nurse clinic appointment book was instead used to record patient appointments after they had occurred.
202. This system of managing health requests is different to most other sites across the prison estate and may result in confusion for health staff at other sites, or missed interventions for prisoners who transfer to other prisons.
203. We reviewed the health recall list for 27 September 2018. There were 85 recalls in place, including 30 outstanding recalls dating back to 14 April. Sixteen patients on the recall list were seen by a nurse or doctor. One of these was for a prisoner who was receiving an influenza vaccination and whose recall had been rescheduled 12 times. At 15 October 2018, 16 of the 85 patients had not been seen, including one who had been rescheduled seven times.

Medical Officer

204. The Medical Officer is contracted 10 hours per week over two weekdays. At 26 September 2018, 32 patients were booked for appointments, with waiting times of no more than eight days. At the time of our inspection the doctor was a locum who was due to finish his contract on 18 December. No replacement had been secured.
205. Of the 29 prisoners we interviewed, seven expressed concern about how long it took to see a doctor or receive other health care such as scans, and nine had no concerns or were positive about health care (others did not comment).
206. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that doctor hours had been increased which had resulted in a reduction in waiting time for this service and allowed all urgent matters to be seen in a timely manner.

Dentist

207. A dental service is provided by a private provider for six hours per week. At the time of our site visit 61 patients were waiting to be seen, with a maximum waiting time for non-urgent care of six weeks. Patients who require emergency dental care are taken to the local Accident and Medical Clinic if the dentist is not on site.

Physiotherapist

208. The physiotherapist is contracted for one two-hour clinic per week. Between three and six patients are seen at each clinic. At the time of our site visit five patients were on the waiting list with a wait time of 2–3 weeks.

Long-term/follow-up treatment

209. Treatment plans are used for patients with significant health conditions and contain detailed information about key health contacts, clinical goals, interventions and risks. At the time of our site visit nine prisoners had treatment plans.
210. We reviewed two plans which outlined the prisoners' clinical issues and treatment goals, and the interventions required. The plans could be more specific about the interventions such as frequency of testing/monitoring. One of the plans was overdue for review, and the prisoner's recall appointment had been rescheduled 11 times.
211. Review of prisoners with long-term conditions showed that some lacked the required recalls for future interventions.
212. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that in June 2019 the prison would move to a new system to manage appointments and recalls. The Lower North Regional Clinical Director would provide support and oversight as the site made the changes.

Specialist/emergency equipment

213. At both sites there was evidence that medical equipment had had annual medico-electrical/calibration checks.

Consent

214. During the Reception Health Assessment, prisoners are asked to sign Consent to Receive Health and Dental Services forms. At both sites we observed reception health triages in which prisoners were given copies of this form and asked to sign it. At the New Plymouth Remand Centre the nurse gave a full explanation of the form and its contents; at Whanganui Prison the nurse asked if the prisoner could read but otherwise gave very little explanation. During all other interactions between nurses and prisoners that we observed, nurses gave good explanations and sought consent for any interventions offered. On one occasion we saw a consultation with a prisoner who was mentally unwell. Nurses were very careful to explain the proposed interventions and ensure that nothing was done without the prisoner's consent.
215. Our observations and a review of documentation for consultations with patients showed that patients were generally informed, consulted and involved in the planning of their care.

Treatment of elderly prisoners

216. At the time of our inspection the prison had 21 prisoners aged 65 or over. Nurses had received no training on the specific physical or mental health needs of older people.
217. One of the patients had a risk of falls, having experienced falls on several occasions, yet no formal assessment had been completed to assess the severity of the risk or inform appropriate clinical interventions (such as physiotherapy, exercises or falls prevention education).

Custodial support

218. The Health Centre is supported by two custodial officers each day, who are rostered on for a week at a time to escort prisoners to and from the centre. Having different officers work in the Health Centre each week compromised the efficiency of the service. When officers who did not have a good understanding of the health service were rostered, there were often delays in movements and not as many prisoners would be seen in clinics.
219. Mental health clinicians told us they relied on custodial staff to escort them to some residential units for consultations. Custodial staff were not always available to do this, which restricted clinicians' access to prisoners.

220. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that two custodial officers were now assigned to the Health Unit to provide custodial oversight and high security units had 'runners' to deliver prisoners to health appointments. Health staff now had access to other rooms across the site for routine consultations, which had improved the timeliness of appointments and reduced the number of escorts to the main Health Clinic.

Screening and immunisation

221. The Health Centre provides or organises screening for sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis B and C, HIV, diabetes, cardiovascular risk, alcohol and drug, and mental health.
222. It also offers immunisations for influenza, hepatitis B, tetanus, and human papilloma virus. We could find no evidence of the prison offering immunisation for shingles. Since 1 April 2018 the shingles vaccine has been funded for adults aged 65-80.

Medication

223. Controlled drugs at the prison are stored securely and recorded in a controlled drug register, in accordance with the Medicines Act and Misuse of Drugs Act.
224. Nurses administer prescribed medications during morning, afternoon and evening medication rounds, in accordance with the Department of Corrections' Health Services Medicines Management Policy.
225. The site Population Needs Assessment document recorded that 42 percent of prisoners were prescribed medications for the nervous system (such as antidepressants and medications for anxiety and ADHD).

Complaints

226. Prisoners told us they knew how to make complaints about health care if they wished to, either by using the Department of Corrections' prisoner complaint system (PC.01) or by contacting the Health and Disability Advocacy Service.
227. During the three months to 30 September 2018 the prison received 14 health-related PC.01 complaints from 10 prisoners. The majority of complaints were medication related. The Health Centre Manager responded to most complaints within 3-5 days.

Mental health services

228. Primary mental health services at Whanganui Prison include nurses, doctor, and mental health clinicians, Packages of Care provider and ACC sensitive claim counselling. Referrals to the forensic service can be made for secondary assessment and treatment.
229. The Packages of Care provider also supports prisoners at the New Plymouth Remand Centre, and has approval to continue treatment in the community if a prisoner is released.
230. At 26 September 2018, 27 prisoners were on the caseload of forensic mental health services. A forensic nurse visits the prison five days a week to monitor those prisoners and triage others identified as possibly needing psychiatric support. The nurse travels to the New Plymouth Remand Centre as needed. A forensic psychiatrist visits the prison once a week.
231. Purehurehu is the regional forensic secure in-patient facility in Wellington which provides acute and rehabilitative mental health assessment and care. This facility also takes admissions from other lower North Island prisons and there is a waiting list for admission, which means that some prisoners identified as needing mental health treatment in a secure facility are instead remaining in prison.

232. At the time of our inspection, two prisoners had been assessed as needing admission into Purehurehu. One of these prisoners was severely mentally unwell and required admission to Whanganui Hospital. One prisoner waited more than two months to be admitted to forensic care.

Intervention and Support Unit

233. The prison has an Intervention and Support Unit (ISU) for prisoners assessed to be at risk of self harm. The New Plymouth Remand Centre has one cell designated for at risk prisoners.
234. The ISU has 12 cells including three dry cells (which contain no plumbing or furnishings which could be used for self harm). Its staff hub has no direct line of sight into the corridors where the cells are located. However, there are cameras in the cells.
235. We visited the unit on one day during our visit. The unit had seven prisoners – one at risk of self harm and six who were mentally unwell and could not be safely housed anywhere else. Depending on the risks, prisoners could be allowed out of their cells for a considerable period of each day, and spend time in the day room, where they could interact with each other and had access to books and a television. Prisoners also had access to a telephone to call their families. During our inspection, an office was being turned into a quiet room where prisoners could go if they needed time and space to themselves.
236. For the most part, ISU staff were active in their management of prisoners, showing good knowledge of prisoners' lives and concerns, and a considerable degree of care and compassion. We interviewed two prisoners in the unit, who both said they felt well supported by staff.
237. Staff told us they had no mental health training. We observed some interactions which reflected that lack of training and/or failure to follow required procedures including:
- » A prisoner at risk of self-harm was to be checked every 15 minutes. We observed three occasions when the checks did not occur but an officer later recorded them as having occurred.
 - » One prisoner was brought to the ISU late in the evening with no documentation as to why he was being transferred. He was elderly and infirm, and was placed in a dry cell where he found it very difficult to manage his toileting. The following morning, a nurse assessed him and he was transferred to another cell.
 - » One prisoner, who was mentally unwell, was kept in the unit without the required segregation authority under section 60(1) of the Corrections Act 2004. During our site visit, the required segregation authority was obtained.
238. Following our inspection, the National Commissioner advised that the prison recognised the importance of correctly documenting observations and actions in the ISU. A reminder had been sent to ISU staff about completing At Risk observations and further assurance checks would take place.
239. The National Commissioner advised that the two mental health clinicians delivered around 10 hours of training to staff each week on a variety of mental health subjects. Staff training is one of the initiatives of Corrections' Intervention and Support Project. The training is designed to help staff make the right individualised decisions and more effectively define the responsibilities of those involved in the care of vulnerable prisoners. This training was delivered at the prison in October 2018.

Findings

- Finding 22. In general, prisoners at Whanganui Prison received a reasonable standard of health care which was comparable to what they could expect to receive in the community.
- Finding 23. The site was not able to cover rostered shifts when nurses were on leave, which put additional pressure on the team and impacted on delivery of care to prisoners.
- Finding 24. The Health Centre was short of holding cells and there was no appropriate and therapeutic space available for Improving Mental Health clinicians to see prisoners.
- Finding 25. The lack of dedicated custodial staff impacted on service delivery at times.
- Finding 26. Some of the processes for obtaining patient information, managing appointments and recalls could compromise patient care.
- Finding 27. Staff in the ISU did not have mental health training and were being asked to manage prisoners with challenging mental health conditions.
- Finding 28. Staff, at times, failed to properly document their actions which posed a significant and high risk.

Spiritual support

240. The prison has two part-time chaplains and one volunteer assistant. Another 39 volunteers also provide services. The prison chaplains offer Sunday and midweek church services, Bible classes, and one-on-one pastoral and cultural support to prisoners. The chaplains advised that they aimed to support prisoners of all faiths, and those with no faith. The chaplains had access to all units and said they received good support from custodial staff. Prisoners told us they knew how to access chaplains if needed.

Reintegration

241. Case managers start working with prisoners to develop an offender plan from initial reception into custody, and develop and confirm this plan as their sentence progresses. Proposed release plans for long-serving prisoners are outlined and confirmed in the Assessment Reports provided to the New Zealand Parole Board before scheduled hearings. Planning is based on a prisoner's risk of re-offending and the support needed to manage that risk.

Temporary release

242. The Department of Corrections can approve temporary release from custody for eligible and suitable prisoners to aid their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.¹³ Temporary release opportunities can include Release to Work, where prisoners are released to work on prison grounds outside the perimeter or for private employers outside the facility, and Guided Release, where prisoners are accompanied on visits to local communities and to services such as accommodation providers and banks.¹⁴
243. Before deciding to grant an application for temporary release, the Department of Corrections must consider any risks to public safety, the extent to which the prisoner should be supervised or monitored while outside the facility, the benefits to the prisoner and the community of temporary release, and whether temporary release would undermine the integrity of the prisoner's sentence. Decisions about temporary release are made by the Prison Director (or Regional Commissioner if the release is to be for longer than 12 hours) based on recommendations from an advisory panel.
244. Prisoners on temporary release are typically subject to electronic monitoring and strict conditions about how long they can be away from the prison and where they can go. They may be strip searched on return.

Guided Release

245. The Guided Release programme is aimed at long-serving prisoners who need help reintegrating into the community. Guided Release coordinators work with prisoners to gradually reintroduce them to the community, and help them deal with immediate needs such as finding accommodation, opening bank accounts, looking for work or applying for benefits, and helping them if problems arise. The programme is only available to prisoners eligible and suitable for temporary release.¹⁵ It is especially important for prisoners with little or no family support on release.
246. In the six months prior to the inspection, 34 prisoners took part in Guided Release activities. One of the prisoners in the external Self Care Unit told us he had made arrangements for his release, including for accommodation, doctor, dentist, and driver licence, and meeting his probation officer and a support person.
247. We attended a meeting of the advisory panel which determines who can access temporary release opportunities. The panel considered 12 applications and approved five for placement in the external Self Care Unit, three for Guided Release, and one for Release to Work.

¹³ Temporary release purposes and criteria are set out in Corrections Act 2004, ss 62-64. Also see Corrections Regulations 2005, regulations 26-29; Department of Corrections Prison Operations Manual, M04.06. Temporary release can also be granted on compassionate grounds or to further the interests of justice.

¹⁴ Other temporary release opportunities include external self-care in which prisoners live in accommodation outside the prison perimeter; and visits to children under child protection protocols.

¹⁵ Temporary release criteria are set out in Corrections Act 2004, ss 62-64. The programme is only available to minimum security prisoners or those who the Parole Board has ordered released.

248. The Principal Case Manager told us Guided Release helped prisoners prepare for the challenges they might face outside prison, and build relationships with probation officers and others who support them after release.

Reintegration support services

249. In the six months to 31 July 2018, 38 prisoners were granted parole. All were referred to Work and Income to make arrangements for income support. Twelve of the prisoners were referred to reintegration support services for assistance with accommodation, employment, skills and training, further rehabilitation or personal wellbeing.

Prisoners' readiness for parole or release

250. Of the 29 prisoners we interviewed, four were scheduled for release during 2018. Of those, two had completed rehabilitation programmes and had engaged in Guided Release activities to arrange accommodation and prepare them for release. The other two were on sentences of six months or less. Neither had completed programmes in prison (one was transferred to Whanganui Prison while completing an Alcohol and Other Drugs programme at another prison). One had accommodation and a job arranged through family, while the other had no arrangements.
251. We also interviewed seven prisoners who were eligible for parole. Three were completing rehabilitation programmes required under their offender plan, and one had not started any programmes (three did not comment). Four had accommodation arranged and two did not (one did not comment). One had employment arranged and two others were confident they would find work as they had trade skills.
252. Two other prisoners, who were due to become eligible for parole in the six months after our site inspection, had not started any rehabilitation programmes.
253. The prison has monthly meetings to discuss prisoners' parole readiness. The meetings are attended by psychologists, a parole ready senior advisor, and staff from case management, programmes, Community Corrections, Guided Release, and residential units. We attended a meeting in which 22 prisoners were discussed in depth and plans formed to assist with their parole readiness. Several were recommended for Guided Release.
254. Case management staff said the emphasis on parole readiness had been a significant shift within the last 12 months. One case manager said it could be difficult to arrange for prisoners to complete all rehabilitation programmes – and in particular high intensity programmes – before the parole eligibility date.
255. Following the inspection, the National Commissioner advised that the prison worked hard to navigate the challenges of sourcing accommodation for prisoners being released. The case management team had developed a pre-release assessment to ensure prisoners were engaging promptly and effectively with the Ministry of Social Development. This had supported a number of people with complex needs or offending to secure social housing. Additionally, parole ready panels were in place to support prisoners' readiness for parole board hearings and release.

Findings

- Finding 29. Staff and management placed considerable emphasis on planning and preparing for prisoners' reintegration into the community, and the prison granted a high proportion of applications for reintegration activities such as Guided Release. Parole readiness meetings addressed issues with rehabilitation and barriers to parole.
- Finding 30. Among prisoners who were due for release or eligible for parole, not all had accommodation arranged. Some prisoners – especially those on short-term sentences or those needing high-intensity programmes – had not completed any rehabilitation programmes.

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Appendix – Images



Image 1: Whanui Marae



Image 2: A makeshift toilet cover:
Whakapakari Unit



Image 3: Toilet visible through cell door
in high security unit

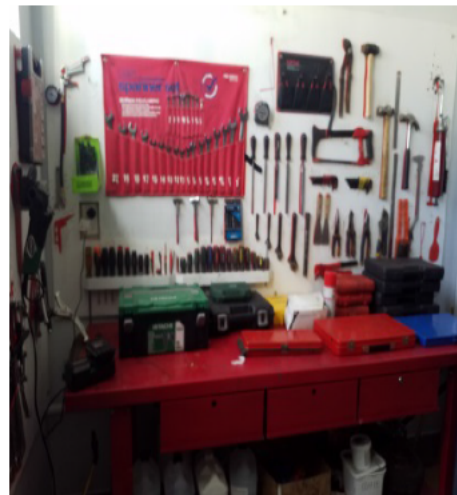


Image 4: Small motors workshop



Image 5: Main gym – high security units



Image 6: Secure Online Suite



Image 7: Worn out gym equipment in high security units



Image 8: Library



Image 9: Cell in the New Plymouth Remand Centre



Image 10: Showers in need of refurbishment – Te Whakataa



Image 11: Cell in Whanui



Image 12: Te Ohore (external Self Care)