

Spring Hill Corrections Facility Inspection – May 2025

Quick-read summary

Mā te titiro me te whakarongo ka puta mai te māramatanga -
By looking and listening, we will gain insight.

This report was published in July 2026 by the Office of the Inspectorate.

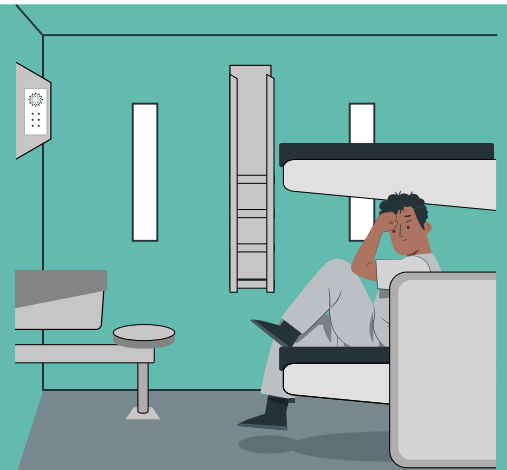
The Inspectorate is part of the Department of Corrections but works independently. We inspect prisons to make sure prisoners are treated fairly.

What we did:

- We visited Spring Hill Corrections Facility (SHCF) on 22 – 30 May 2025 to carry out the inspection.
- We talked to **109 prisoners.**
- We talked to **248 staff and service providers.**
- We got information from the prison and Corrections.

At the time of the inspection:

- There were **829 people in the prison.**
- **198** of those people had been sentenced.
- **631** were on remand.
- **545** of the people were Māori.



What did prisoners say?

- Most were unlocked for only 90 to 120 minutes a day.
- A lot did not feel safe due to bullying.
- Many said there was not much to do.
- Some did not have enough clothes or bedding.
- Māori prisoners had little or no access to cultural support.
- Most said healthcare was good once they got to see a Nurse or Doctor.
- Pigeons were making a mess which was dirty and unhealthy.

What did we find?

We found some positives and some things that could be better, including:

- Only 33% of prisoners were receiving a site induction interview where prison rules were explained to them by a custodial officer.
- Custodial staff were often short-staffed which meant staff such as Nurses, Case Managers and Education Tutors could not access prisoners to provide services.
- The Case Management team was struggling to complete tasks on time due to the high number of prisoners coming in for short times on remand and then being released.
- For most prisoners, there were few education or rehabilitation programmes available.
- Prisoners in the Special Treatment Unit were doing rehabilitation programmes and took part in daily community meetings, cultural celebrations and other positive activities.
- Young prisoners aged 18 and 19 were unlocked slightly more often, but in other ways were being managed the same as adult prisoners.
- Prisoners could get a range of health services, but sometimes had to wait a long time to be seen.
- The lack of custodial staff was affecting timely access to health services including Nurse and Doctor appointments, medication rounds, and mental health services.
- People who needed forensic mental health care were waiting too long to be seen, with wait times ranging between 33 days and 134 days.
- Food was mostly all right, but we heard prisoners sometimes got sandwiches for lunch that only had margarine in them. This is not part of the prison menu and is not acceptable.
- No drug testing had been happening for five years, but we were told it had started again in November 2025.
- Around 50 men had jobs in prison industries.
- Only a few prisoners were able to use the site gym and playing field.
- The Release to Work programme was not operating, even though some prisoners may have been eligible.
- Prisoners could have regular in-person visits with family/whānau, but some visitors said some staff were unfriendly or did not communicate well about visits.

What happens next?

After an inspection, the prison creates an action plan to try to fix any problems.

The prison sends the action plan to the Inspectorate and Inspectors check on progress.

More information

The full inspection report is available in prison libraries and online at:

<https://inspectorate.corrections.govt.nz/>

Thank you to all
who talked with
us and helped with
this report.