



REPORT ON

A FULL ANNOUNCED

INSPECTION OF

HM PRISON SHEPTON

MALLET

10th to 14th JANUARY 2000

BY

HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

PREFACE

HMP SHEPTON MALLET is a Category C training establishment where the average stay of its prisoner population is four months. There are a number of good practices at the prison that suggest that it has potential waiting to be realised. It is undoubtedly a safe prison for prisoners. It has the highest outside wall that I have ever seen, parts of which were built of Somerset granite in 1610. Inside I have never seen so many internal fences and gates, the need for some of which I question because they inhibit the normal life of the prison more than aid security. The relationships between staff and prisoners are good. Many prisoners have been there many times before, and so are well known. There is an excellent education department, PE department, and chaplaincy. The Addiction Rehabilitation Centre (ARC) is a most creditable initiative. Health Care is now vibrant, under its new management. The Head of Management Services is clearly a leader of her team. And so on.

The Prison Service sends sex offenders to it, but it does not run Sex Offender Treatment Programme (SOTP) courses. It contains a number of seriously mentally disordered prisoners, and yet, until the past few months, its Health Care arrangements were a disgrace, and there was no way in which they could be cared for. Overall, the prison has precious little to offer a prisoner other than education and PE, and yet its resources have been cut to the bone, and continue to be cut.

But I came away from the prison feeling that it was crying out for direction. The prison was trying to do what it could with what it had been given, namely a disparate group of prisoners including lifers, short and long term prisoners, substance abusers, mentally disordered prisoners and vulnerable prisoners, many of whom were sex offenders in denial. But there was no proper linkage with other establishment to ensure all Category C establishments were co-ordinating their work with prisoners. This was particularly true of sex offenders. It is unwise to allow those who deny their guilt to be housed at Shepton Mallet with no further offending behaviour work. There must be a policy of tackling those who deny their offence.

The new drug policy is an admirable model which others could follow with advantage. It has the potential for being if not a national, then at least an Area asset, to which those in need of treatment, a level below that provided by the therapeutic unit at HMP Channings Wood, could be sent. However, where does it fit in the overall Prison Service drug strategy? Is it being sent so many short-term prisoners because of the way in which staff relate to them or because SHEPTON MALLET is meant to devise programmes for them, in which case where are the resources?

On a number of other occasions I have drawn attention to the effects of the bureaucratic workload being imposed on prisons by departments in Prison Service Headquarters. I do not think that this impact has been brought home to me more starkly than at SHEPTON MALLET. I was told that the 'paper trail', as it was described, was getting worse rather than better. 60 Key Indicators that have to be self-audited, have now been delegated, as well as the submission of a return of returns. But, disgracefully, I found that six Request and Complaints from prisoners had not been answered by the Case Unit in Headquarters, one being six months overdue. I submit that it is essential that any Headquarters puts its own house in order before it criticises its subordinates for far less severe failures.

Following some unsatisfactory Audit results, there had been resurrected an old fear that the prison could be open to being contracted out. I suggest that this is not necessary, unless, having been given clear direction, staff prove that they are unable to do what is required of them. If SHEPTON MALLET is to be a training prison, then it must be appropriately resourced, which includes direction. Never again must Health Care, for example, be allowed to deteriorate in the way that it had, which is why it is so important that Regional Health Authorities become responsible for the contracting arrangements for primary, secondary and mental health contracts. The staff are capable of doing much more with and for prisoners, which, again, is an asset that should be exploited. In other words, as I said at the beginning, what has been delivered behind the high walls of HMP SHEPTON MALLET appears to have been because the Governor and staff thought that it ought to happen, rather

than because they were implementing their given role. They need to be given a more specific role, and judged on their ability to satisfy it.

Sir David Ramsbotham

March 2000

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons

CONTENTS

	Paragraph	Page
PREFACE		3
INTRODUCTION		9
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ES1-ES12	11
CHAPTER ONE SAFETY		
Reception	1.01-1.15	17
Induction and First Night	1.16-1.22	21
Self Harm	1.23-1.29	23
Anti-Bullying	1.30-1.34	25
Incentives and Earned Privileges	1.35-1.41	26
Good Order	1.42-1.44	28
Security	1.45-1.47	29
Segregation Unit	1.48-1.53	30
CHAPTER TWO RESPECT		
A Wing	2.01-2.09	32
B Wing	2.10-2.25	34
C Wing	2.26-2.43	38
What we were told	2.44-2.45	42
Requests and Complaints	2.46	47
Spiritual Activities	2.47-2.51	47
Prison Shop	2.52-2.56	48
Catering	2.57-2.64	50
Health Care	2.65-2.68	51
Pharmacy	2.69-2.85	53
Dental Services	2.86-2.94	56
CHAPTER THREE PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY		
Employment	3.01-3.10	59
Education/Skills Training	3.11-3.35	62
Library	3.36-3.37	68
Physical Education	3.38-3.48	69

		Paragraph	Page
CHAPTER FOUR	LINKS WITH FAMILIES AND PREPARATIONS FOR RELEASE		
	Visits	4.01-4.15	72
	Throughcare	4.16-4.28	76
	Drugs Strategy	4.29-4.46	80
CHAPTER FIVE	MANAGEMENT		
	Estate	5.01-5.15	86
	Health and Safety	5.16-5.20	89
	Fire	5.21-5.28	90
	Finance	5.29-5.31	92
	Strategy	5.32-5.39	93
	What Staff Said	5.40-5.41	95
	Board of Visitors	5.42	98
CHAPTER SIX	RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICE		
	Recommendations		
	Director General	6.01-6.06	100
	Governor	6.07-6.154	101
	Good Practice	6.155-6.165	115
APPENDICES	1. Inspection Team		

INTRODUCTION

Shepton Mallet was a stone built prison of considerable age, surrounded by a very high stone wall and situated adjacent to the town centre. The establishment had largely been rebuilt by prisoner labour in the early 1800s and had at one time been used as a military prison. The prison reverted to the Prison Service in 1966. It had been classified as a low security prison and at the time of inspection held Category C prisoners mostly drawn from the surrounding area. They were held in three residential units of different sizes.

A large, secure, multi-storey concrete workshop block had been added in the 1960's outside the prison wall on the other side of one of the town's many narrow streets. Access from the prison was by a secure enclosed concrete bridge. This building was unusual in that, although outside the secure perimeter wall, it was not itself enclosed at all either by wall or fence. The very restricted area within the wall had allowed but little additional building, which had been carried out in concrete blockwork, textured and coloured to match the stonework. Quite understandably, most of the prison buildings were listed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES1 Shepton Mallet has been holding prisoners on a virtually continuous basis for nearly 400 years. Most of the existing buildings were early 19th Century with some modern ones added. The whole site was very tight with the only outdoor recreational area restricted to a small exercise yard overlooked by the three residential wings. Moving prisoners from one area to another was very difficult for staff to supervise, as the whole prison was made up of twisting corridors, staircases and buildings set at right angles to each other. Inside, the buildings had a modern look and cells were arranged in galleries on all three wings. The security category of the prison was set at “C” level, yet we found the level of security supervision was high for this type of establishment. There was a 20ft wall no prisoner had escaped for some years. As movement of prisoners around the establishment was so difficult and the capacity of the prison very small, holding only just over 200 prisoners, security and supervision was more intense than in other Category C prisons; this should be re-evaluated.

ES2 There were three residential wings. A wing and B wing which held prisoners on normal location and C wing which was dedicated to holding those prisoners who were considered vulnerable and in need of a separate regime; most of these were sex offenders. Resources were not available to provide full time purposeful activity for the whole prisoner population. For those on normal location, education was the dominant activity. Most of the education provision was organised as part time attendance. When not undertaking purposeful activity, those on normal location had daily access to the gym or remained locked in their cells. Association was available every other evening. Vulnerable prisoners were provided with a similar regime but they also had a small textiles workshop.

ES3 The regime itself was characterised by excellent relationships between staff and prisoners. A low assault rate and the use of control and restraint reinforced this and the segregation unit was rarely used. There was a very relaxed atmosphere and prisoners

constantly commented to inspectors on how helpful staff were when they approached them. Shepton Mallet had many of the features required to provide a safe environment for prisoners. Staff showed respect to prisoners as people and treated them as individuals. The dominant form of control was through persuasion and the authority they carried as staff; there were few adjudications and not many prisoners on the basic level of incentives. All this made a great foundation on which to provide a regime that could be purposeful and help prisoners face the problems of their offending behaviour. However, on this point more work needed to be done.

ES4 Apart from sentence planning, which listed targets that prisoners had to achieve, and a cognitive skills course, most prisoners could successfully freewheel through Shepton Mallet. This was not to say that all of them did, or were not affected positively by their experience. But those who wanted to have an easy life, could avoid looking at their offending behaviour. One of the first areas which needed to be tackled was increasing the amount of work personal officers achieved. Most of the records contained entries describing misbehaviour or failures to conform to the established routines. Officers had sufficient time to do far more. During the day there were staff available on the wing who had the time and opportunity to approach prisoners and work with them. During evening association, staff could do more by talking and discussing issues with prisoners. All this should be properly recorded. There was no systematic induction programme and this needed to be put into place. Little work was done in checking before release that each prisoner had tackled the vital problem of having somewhere to live, understood how to apply for the available benefits and had dealt with any outstanding debts. All this needed energetic management, and for staff to realise how they could be more fully involved. It was not a big step for the establishment to take and there were sufficient resources.

ES5 One of the positive aspects of Shepton Mallet was a new drugs policy. The establishment was completing preparations for a small unit for twenty-two prisoners who had undertaken to take part in a “12 step” abstinence course. This was to be linked to a drug free environment in A wing and it was hoped would provide a sense of continuity of

treatment and approach throughout the establishment. All this made a great deal of sense and with the new CARATS programme, would provide an important foundation from which to tackle drug issues.

ES6 Specialist areas were good. Education, which dominated purposeful activity, was well organised and ran programmes with good teaching evident. The Chaplain took an active part in the regime, taking pastoral duties right into the centre of the prison. Health care had recently been reordered and was providing a good level of care with plans to increase clinics in the near future. The Physical Education programme was good with an enthusiastic staff. Caterers offered a good standard of meals and the lack of serious criticism of the food by the prisoners was evidence that all was well. Visits were satisfactory, held in an area which provided a good environment although the approach to security procedures both at the beginning and end of visits needed to be improved.

ES7 One area of concern to managers was deciding how to deal with the issues presented by the vulnerable prisoners in C wing; many of them were denying guilt for their offences and as there were no courses to explore these attitudes, the probability was that they would continue to reinforce their sense of injustice. These prisoners needed attention to help them to prepare for release. One development, which should be considered, is the introduction of integration of the vulnerable prisoners into the main prison; that is not to say that they should share living accommodation and it makes sense for them to retain C wing as a different area, but many of the activities could be shared and this development should be considered.

The following conclusions and recommendations are based upon the assessment of a healthy prison taken from Chapter 7 of the Thematic Review "Suicide is Everyone's Concern", published by HM Inspectorate of Prisons in May 1999.

Safety

ES8 Shepton Mallet provided a safe environment for prisoners. There was a low level of assaults and use of control and restraint. Prisoners felt safe and tests were being undertaken to check this. Control was mainly through persuasion but the main motivator used was the Incentive Scheme. There was a level of inequality over privileges given to those on enhanced in different parts of the prison which mainly centred on the use of televisions.

Recommendations

- **Access to televisions as part of the Incentive and Earned Privileges Scheme should be reviewed.**
- **The integration of vulnerable prisoners into regime activities should be considered**

Respect

ES9 The relationship between staff and prisoners was good. A much more active Personal Officer Scheme needed to be developed. Officers should reach out to prisoners, monitor their progress and have this properly recorded. The level of respect shown to prisoners by all staff was of a high order. Health care was good and the development of clinics was planned.

Recommendations

- **The Personal Officer Scheme should be overhauled and made a much more positive and far-reaching system.**
- **The scope of health care clinics should be extended**

Purposeful activity

ES10 There was insufficient purposeful activity to engage prisoners in full time work, training, or other activities; this will become more important as the drug programmes are developed and prisoners will need the benefit provided by very active regimes. There was some capacity within the buildings to create small workshops and this had been considered.

The expansion of education should also be considered building on an established and proven base. A further area which needed to be developed was physical education.

ES11 More consideration needed to be given to prisoners who were not able to participate in the purposeful day. The traditional approach within Shepton Mallet was to confine them to their cells. This needed to be questioned. It was a Category C establishment and a freer regime should be developed within the whole prison. If this was developed, then prisoners could help each other more with education and other activities. The level of supervision staff already provided would allow for greater freedom.

Recommendations

- **An expansion of work especially for those on normal location should be provided**
- **Expansion of education should take place if it is not possible to create further employment facilities**
- **Physical education should be expanded as an immediate help to provide more activity, especially for those undergoing drug treatment**
- **The current level of restrictions to cells for those not involved in activities should be re-examined so that a less restricted regime can be introduced.**

Links with family and preparation for discharge

ES12 Overall, visits provision was satisfactory, and this was especially so as many of the prisoners lived within fifty miles of their home. It was more difficult for those who came from Wales and other areas. The sentence management plans drawn up at the beginning of a prisoner's time in custody and then reviewed were satisfactory. Many of the listed targets, for each prisoner would have little hope of being achieved, especially for particular courses which were oversubscribed. The Education Department ran a range of life skill courses, supported by the Chaplain. One significant problem not being tackled was how prisoners should prepare for release. There were no checks on accommodation, links with families,

work, debt and benefits. All this needed to be addressed and resettlement courses as well as induction programmes needed to be introduced.

Recommendations

- **A proper needs analysis should be carried out of the population linked to a full induction programme**
- **A rigorous system of ensuring issues relating to discharge are checked for each prisoner prior to re-entering society**
- **All staff should have far more involvement in the problems of offending behaviour and preparation for release.**

CHAPTER ONE

SAFETY

Reception

1.01 Reception had recently been relocated in a block separate from the main prison, which also held various workshops, part of education and the Works Department. It had only been open for five weeks and was still quite spartan in appearance. Reception staff had been consulted and involved in the design of the new area which was kept very clean and well decorated. The only major drawback with the current location was that when prisoners entered Shepton Mallet they had to walk through an area which was not sterile to get to reception. There was very little natural light in the area with the only windows being made up of tiny frosted panes of glass. The lighting provided was from fluorescent tubing.

1.02 The reception area itself was clean, bright and spacious. It consisted of a fairly large central area in which processing of prisoners took place. This central area contained a counter and cubicles in which prisoners were strip-searched. A staff office, various holding areas, a medical room and toilet were all adjacent to the processing area. A storeroom for prisoners stored property was located behind the counter. This was spacious, very clean and well organised with prisoner's property properly stored in sealed boxes on racking and clothing hung on rails.

1.03 There were two holding rooms for prisoners in reception, plus a cell. These were all very small and may have been adequate to hold a maximum of three or four prisoners but certainly no more. Staff told us that if more than half a dozen prisoners were received the doors of the holding rooms were left open to minimise the discomfort felt by prisoners waiting there. This was confirmed during the inspection. There was no information at all on display in either of these holding rooms or the cells. A notice board, which contained a fair amount of information, was located on the wall outside the non-sterile holding room but this

information could only be read if the door of the cell and holding room were left unlocked. The reception staff however were fully aware of this and told us of their intention to relocate these notices inside the holding rooms. The doors of these rooms were part glazed with frosted glass which made clear visibility into the cell difficult. There was nothing to occupy prisoners when they were in reception. **Consideration should be given to providing magazines, a radio or a television for this purpose.**

1.04 There was no information in the holding cells for prisoners to read, nor was there any for them to take away about Shepton Mallet; there was a notice however to inform prisoners that the Prisoners information book was available from the Library in nine different languages. There were no notices in reception about Listeners, Samaritans or anti-bullying. **This would be an appropriate place to display this information, in particular how prisoners could access help if necessary.**

1.05 Space was limited if vulnerable prisoners arrived in reception at the same time as those destined for normal location. Although there was a cell available this could be needed for other prisoners if more than four arrived at one time. Additionally, there was only one holding room available once prisoners had been processed. In practice the vulnerable prisoner would be processed as soon as possible and then located on C wing. We observed both groups of prisoners in reception and were, in general, pleased with the way in which the processing of the vulnerable prisoners was handled. However, the processing of the other prisoners was suspended until one reception officer had located him onto his unit. There were four officers trained to work in reception at the time of the inspection, although other officers with training were used if necessary.

1.06 We observed reception on an unusually busy day when staff had received eight prisoners on transfer from Swansea and Bristol prisons. We were very impressed with the manner in which the prisoners were dealt with by the two officers on duty. They were courteous and caring, ensuring all the prisoners had a hot drink and were as comfortable as possible. A good relationship was evident between the reception officers and Group Four

staff who were the escort contractors. We also observed good relationships with other departments within the prison, for example the wings, health care and the workshop patrol, with each department assisting the others.

1.07 Strip-searching took place in one of two purpose built cubicles. Although there were no screens the level of privacy afforded was adequate. Dressing gowns were available and a towel was placed on the floor for prisoners to stand on. Again the area was very clean.

1.08 Prisoners were moved onto the living units without delay as soon as they were processed. They had access to toilets in reception, which again were spotlessly clean and offered sufficient privacy. However, there were no showering facilities or telephones. As prisoners were unlikely to be allowed to make a telephone call once they were located on the wing unless it was their turn for association, **a telephone should be installed in reception for prisoners to use while they are waiting to be processed or located.**

1.09 There was a cheerful atmosphere in reception and the staff were polite and had a good rapport with the prisoners. They explained the procedures as they went along and took trouble to ensure prisoners were put at ease. ***We were particularly impressed with the sensitive manner in which they carried out strip-searching.*** They were ready to help with any queries relating to reception and took trouble to follow up lost property etc. However, if prisoners had any other queries or questions they were told to wait until they got onto the wings. This was not always appropriate and more helpful responses could have been given.

1.10 The handling of documents dealing with the immediate needs of prisoners needed attention. A prisoner had returned to Shepton Mallet from Bristol and was on an open 2052SH booklet (at risk of self-harm). No immediate check was made of this prisoner's well being nor was the open booklet examined by anyone. The prisoner was located on the unit very quickly which was good but the self-harm booklet remained in reception. When

questioned some three hours later, the wing staff were still unaware that the prisoner in their care was still thought to be at risk of self-harm. Health care staff had seen this individual in reception and assumed that he was on an open 2052 because the prisoner had mentioned a case review to come off it, but no one had checked. No initial interviews took place and no information was recorded for the use of the wing. **Procedures to explore prisoners' immediate needs in reception should be improved and a system to ensure vital information is passed from reception to the wings should be put in place.**

1.11 Prisoners were offered an advance of wages in reception. They had a wider choice than we have seen in most establishments, being able to select from a smokers pack which contained tobacco, matches and cigarette papers, a non-smokers pack which contained two phonecards and some sweets or a "half smokers" pack which comprised of a phonecard and tobacco but no cigarette papers! As one prisoner pointed out "there was no point in having baccy without rizzlas". All were of a value of £4, which was paid back at the rate of £1 a week. They were also provided with clean prison kit, bedding and eating utensils at this point.

1.12 During the week of the inspection there were 20 movements through reception. These comprised of sixteen prisoners transferred in from other establishments, two transferred out and two who were released at the end of their sentence. In the month prior to our inspection there had been 76 movements through reception which included 34 transfers into the establishment, 20 out, nine released after completion of their sentence and six released on Home Detention Curfew.

1.13 Once again we heard of times when transfers to other prisons had been cancelled with little or no prior notice. On one of the days we inspected reception a prisoner had been brought from the wing ready to be transferred to HMP Sudbury. His cell had been cleared and all the necessary processes had been completed. However, the escort had been postponed until the following day. We were told that on occasions a fax would be sent from Group Four the evening before the escort was due to go out, but because there

were no staff in reception or the discipline office in the evening the information rarely got through. There were obvious repercussions to this in the inconvenience caused to the prisoner and his family and the time wasted by the staff.

1.14 We observed a prisoner being released at the end of his sentence. He was brought to reception by the reception staff after breakfast, his property etc being sorted out the previous day. Again we observed a cheerful and helpful attitude from the staff with all the discharge procedures carried out in an efficient manner, by both the officers and the Principal Officer responsible for the final checks. Carrier bags were provided for prisoners to carry their property.

1.15 Prisoners' property was treated with respect with men given the option of hanging their suits and coats in proper suit covers rather than storing them in boxes. There was a washing machine and dryer located in reception, although we were told the washing machine was not working. Prisoners could normally apply to have their clothes washed a week before their discharge.

Induction

1.16 First night arrangements varied. Although many prisoners we spoke to told us they had been given a basic induction talk as soon as they arrived on the wing, usually as part of a group, others said they had received no information at all. Phonecalls were permitted if the prisoners had a phonecard and the wing he was on was out on association. Some were provided with library books which was good practice. One prisoner had been given a very useful leaflet which explained the wing rules and routines. Unfortunately, this particular prisoner could not read but this would be an appropriate leaflet to issue to all new receptions with an explanation to those who may not be able to read or understand it. **First night arrangements should be firmed up with all prisoners receiving the necessary information for their first few days at Shepton Mallet, a private interview with a member of staff to identify any immediate concerns and the opportunity to make contact with their family.**

1.17 Until August 1999 A wing had served as the Induction wing for Shepton Mallet and the induction programme had been centred there. Since it ceased to have this function, new receptions to the establishment were dispersed on all three living units and the induction programme had collapsed. Consequently, there was no formal induction programme in operation and each wing was left to devise its own package. **A proper, structured induction programme should be devised and implemented which reflects the needs of the types of prisoner received at Shepton Mallet.**

1.18 The remains of the induction programme which were still effective consisted of education interviews and assessments on Monday mornings followed by a talk with the chaplain and PE induction in the afternoon. At some point in the week new receptions may have seen the Board of Visitors and a representative from the Probation Department. Apart from sessions in the gym and association and exercise periods most prisoners would spend the majority of this week locked in their cells. We did note that some prisoners had been allocated work during this week **but the time locked in cell for all prisoners both on the induction programme and waiting to go on it should be kept to a minimum.**

1.19 Induction, such as it was, started on a Monday which meant that any prisoners arriving in the establishment could wait up to six days before attending and because they had to undergo induction before being allocated a job or going to the gymnasium, a good deal of this time was spent behind a cell door. There were on average around eight new receptions each week. **Due to the relatively small numbers involved and the scope of the existing induction programme, we could see no reason why prisoners could not undergo this process sooner.**

1.20 Attempts had been made by the wings to formalise the initial induction interview, which was carried out as soon as possible after arrival on the unit. This was still in its infancy but should be encouraged and supported with the aim of integrating it into a formal induction programme. An “initial assessment and induction record” had been produced in

which the Personal Officer could record initial information obtained about the prisoner, with space for initial observations. There was also a checklist to ensure that the prisoner had received various items such as his reception visiting order, been seen by various departments and agreed and signed his compact. Written information was also provided on accommodation cleanliness, cell standards and the Listeners scheme. This document and the information sheets, although a good idea were fairly basic and superficial. **They should be expanded and developed to provide a detailed assessment of the prisoner and his needs and a substantive induction booklet be introduced to supplement the induction procedure.**

1.21 The results of our questionnaire indicated that 68% of prisoners had undertaken the induction course and in most of these cases this was within a week of arrival. This would suggest that some prisoners were missed and **steps should be taken to ensure that all prisoners undertake induction**, particularly as only two in our sample had been at Shepton Mallet before.

1.22 Prisoners within their first week at Shepton Mallet made the following comments:

- “Its much like any other prison so it seems a bit pointless making us wait a whole week until we can go on induction”
- “What would be good would be to be able to get to the library while waiting for induction”
- “The wing SO spoke to us all straight away but then we were just stuck in a cell”
- “Induction takes about 40 minutes; the rest of the time its bang up”

Self Harm

1.23 The Suicide Awareness committee was chaired by the Head of Residence and it met every three months. Although representation came from several departments, residential staff rarely attended these meetings, although the C wing liaison officer had attended the last meeting on 8 September 1999. Residential staff are vital to the

implementation of policies and are likely to be the first on the scene of incidents.

Residential staff should attend all meetings.

1.24 The recent Prison Service audit had made a plethora of recommendations, concerning procedures and documentation; this was beginning to be addressed and staff training had been given suitable priority. However, given the large amount of work to be done, the committee might be more productive if it met more frequently.

1.25 There had been no deaths in custody for at least two years and the recorded incidents of self harm were 33 in 1998 and 38 in 1999. We asked two members of the Suicide Awareness committee whether they knew the level of incidents in the last two years. One did not know and another thought it was around 20; this indicated a poor level of communication between policy makers which was disappointing.

1.26 The Samaritans were very active in the prison. Three attended on either Friday evening or Saturday to see all new arrivals. On Fridays they also met with Listeners for support meetings and were available on the wings if anyone wanted to see them. The Samaritans expended more than their allocated budget on travel to and from the prison and the deficiency had been met through donations and collections outside. **They said that they were not always informed about suicide attempts; this should be addressed.**

1.27 There were currently seven Listeners, one on A wing, two on B wing and four on C wing. A crisis suite was available on C wing for use by Listeners and prisoners requiring help overnight. It was the practice for prisoners on other wings to be brought onto C wing if necessary.

1.28 We asked staff and managers whether there were **any arrangements in place to notify families in the event of attempted suicide or self harm.** We were unable to get a definitive reply and there seemed no single person or department with this remit. **This should be rectified.**

1.29 The attitude of some staff still displayed the view that self harm was a mechanism of manipulation and we were told that health care staff were adept at telling the difference between the 'genuine' cases and others. During the inspection we encountered a new arrival whose records showed that he was currently at risk of self harm (Form F2052SH). Reception staff did not appear to pick this up and health care staff, when questioned, seemed nonchalant. Neither department took the usual precautionary measure of informing residential staff before the man went onto the wing. It is usually the lack of attention to such detail that requires explanation in attempted or successful suicides rather than an establishment-wide lack of care. This event exemplified the point. Staff cannot afford to be complacent and vigilance has proved to save many a life. **Staff training should be expedited and liaison officers appointed on all residential units.**

Anti-Bullying

1.30 There was an Anti-bullying strategy and guidance document in existence and staff were generally aware of it. However, for many, it was theoretical rather than practical. It used the four stage approach of two warnings, Stages One and Two, reduction to basic regime for a minimum of two weeks on Stage Three. The regime was deliberately restrictive permitting £2.50 private cash and £2.50 earnings per week. Visits were limited to 30 minutes and the prisoner could take no employment, other than approved courses, had no gym and had weekly cell searches. Association was limited to 15 minutes to enable him to shower and make phone calls. Thereafter, formal charges were laid or he was put on Good Order and Discipline at Stage Four. If this failed, the prisoner was often moved to another establishment. Records showed that at least two had gone through this process and were transferred to HMP Dartmoor. There were no identified bullies currently on any stage of the process.

1.31 Management felt that the strategy document needed amending and improvement. To that end, the Senior Officer in the Throughcare Department was taking the lead on its revision and we encourage its promulgation. We were pleased to see an anti-bullying survey

had been undertaken across the establishment and the results had yet to be analysed. A brief look at some of the responses showed that prisoners generally felt safe at Shepton Mallet and staff were helpful to them in this context. Unsafe areas tended to be the shower and recesses on wings.

1.32 There had been no **staff awareness training and this needs to be started**.

There were plans to have a separate committee to deal with anti-bullying as it was currently subsumed within suicide awareness committee meetings.

1.33 We asked several staff and managers where they thought the bullies were to be found. Many thought it was on B wing although evidence showed that C wing had been the place where bullies had gone through the four stage process. Either there was an overall misapprehension or ignorance of what really obtained or identified bullies were being dealt with differently and outside the anti-bullying policy. Whatever the answer, it displayed a need for information with a consistent and coherent approach.

1.34 The revision of the strategy was fine but it should become a working document and kept alive. Staff can play their part but it also requires senior managers to monitor closely, to look at findings and make adjustments so that the practice is relevant for the prisoner population at Shepton Mallet.

Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme

1.35 A local policy had been produced which covered the essential elements of an Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme (IEP). This was a sensible document, which laid out the necessary rules and regulations, means of enforcement, appeals and how the scheme worked overall. It was centrally managed under a senior manager. The actual implementation of the scheme was left mainly to the wings. It was the wing manager's job to ensure the scheme was properly in place, administered correctly and to make decisions regarding the level a prisoner could be on within the system.

1.36 The document itself also contained the “prisoners compact”. This laid down the services and commitments the prison management made to prisoners and the responsibilities and behaviour demanded from each prisoner. The prison’s statements were general. For example, one stated “services include health care, probation, chaplain, education groupwork, also opportunities for work”. **What these services were and what they could offer the prisoner were not described. The compact should be reviewed.**

1.37 All prisoners arriving at Shepton Mallet were placed on the standard level of the incentives scheme. This allowed them to apply for enhanced status after two months. Complaints were received from prisoners stating that where they had been on enhanced at their previous establishment, they dropped to the standard level on arrival at Shepton Mallet. Management explained that **prisoners were entitled to seek early consideration for enhanced if they had been on enhanced before transfer. This was not explained in the document.** Inmates were expected to make their own application to gain enhanced status and this was considered at a board. Appropriate forms and appeal systems were in place.

1.38 On the basic level, two warnings were given and recorded; the second written out and given to the prisoner. On the third occasion consideration was given at a board to downgrading the prisoner to basic. Anyone placed on basic was expected to remain there for 28 days, but a review was carried out after 14 days. The behaviour which had caused them to be placed on basic, was fully explained to the prisoner.

1.39 Some aspects of this system needed to be addressed. The first concerned basic status. The level of visits on standard was two full afternoon visits every 28 days. For basic, it was two half hour visits per 28 days. Management explained that normally those on the basic level would receive the full afternoon, but a half hour period was the minimum that was legally required under the prison rule. **To cut into someone’s visit is to punish the visitor as well as the prisoner and this should be addressed.** The second aspect of the

basic level of the scheme was that no work was done on an individual basis to help the prisoner to address the problems that had brought him to this level of the incentive scheme.

1.40 The main attraction for prisoners to reach the enhanced status was to be allowed to have a television set in their cells. **On C wing it was noted that many of those on standard had the privilege of television sets unlike the other wings. This difference needed to be addressed.**

1.41 Most of the entries in wing prisoners' files were concerned with failures to conform to the regime. **There were virtually no statements, as required within the published document, to identify good performance and how prisoners were behaving generally.** Overall the scheme was well understood and was properly enforced by management.

Good Order

1.42 The quality of life for prisoners in a well ordered establishment is largely based on the nature of the relationship between staff and the prisoners in their charge and the correct balance of the activities and services which are in place to service their needs in a healthy prison. On the whole, Shepton Mallet was a well ordered prison; the relationship between staff and prisoners was easy and relaxed. The atmosphere throughout the establishment was friendly and welcoming. Prisoners told us they felt safe and cared for. There were few of the tensions and frustrations evident in other prisons we have visited. ***Prisoners told us they were treated with friendly courtesy and as individual human beings.*** But the personal officer system was evident in name only with staff making little effort to get to know the prisoners in their care and assess their needs for the short period they had in the prison.

1.43 The living conditions were reasonable and many of the population had the opportunity to hire a television for their cells. But the vehicle for acquiring these sets was the establishment's Incentives and Earned Privileges system. The disparity in treatment for this coveted privilege was seen as unfair. From our examination of wing records it was apparent

that the IEP system was being used by some staff as a method of control rather than for its intended use as a means of encouraging prisoners to improve their behaviour. This had been recognised and changes in the monitoring and assessing procedures were planned. Staff needed to be encouraged to use the system as it was intended.

1.44 The number of adjudications held was low for this type of establishment and the occupation of the few cells in the Segregation Unit was brief and occasional. Over the previous year there had been two assaults on staff and eight on prisoners; this was exceptionally low. The legitimate use of force (Control and Restraint) to control prisoners was rarely used; in the same period, C&R methods had only been deployed on eight occasions. We examined all the forms legitimising the use of C&R and found examples where the forms had not been correctly completed. **The monitoring of Control and Restraint should be improved.**

Security

1.45 The establishment had recently been the subject of a Prison Service security audit and received an acceptable rating. Security matters were being managed by a Principal Officer who reported directly to the Governor. Security routines were competently handled and intelligence correctly collated and analysed. There was no administrative support for this work. This meant that Officers deployed from the wings and other areas and the Principal Officer himself spent considerable amounts of time in the laborious task of entering the details from the Security Information Reports (SIRs) onto the computerised recording system. 169 SIRs had been presented in the previous year. **Administrative support should be provided.**

1.46 The establishment had the distinction of being enclosed by one of the highest perimeter walls in the Prison Service. It was also fitted with a profusion of gates and doors that made any movement across the prison a considerable effort. We could not see the point of many of these obstructions in a prison holding this security category of prisoner. Prisons we have visited such as Ashwell successfully hold a comparable prisoner population

of the same security category with far fewer physical obstructions and defences. **The number of security gates should be reviewed.**

1.47 Supervision of any general prisoner movement was handled very competently and we were particularly impressed by the thoroughness of the searching procedures for vehicles entering and leaving the prison. The excellent relationship that existed between staff and the prisoners in their charge meant that the concept of dynamic security was being put into practice with problems identified at an early stage and swiftly dealt with.

Segregation Unit

1.48 The segregation unit had recently been moved to a corridor opening off B wing and had only been in use for a matter of weeks. There were three cells on one side of this narrow passage. One of the cells had been reserved in case it was required for a violent prisoner. It had no bed or furniture and was very narrow. A person standing in the middle of the cell could comfortably place his hands flat on the opposing walls. **This room was not suitable to be used for anything other than a short term waiting room. This should be addressed.**

1.49 The operational capacity of this unit was theoretically set at three prisoners. In practice no more than the two other cells would be occupied and our examination of the unit records when it was based as an annex to A wing revealed the use of segregation was rare. The unit was staffed by two officers deployed from A and B wing. In practice they spent little time in the unit as there was little for them to do once any prisoners had been fed, allowed the opportunity to exercise and shower.

1.50 There was no discrete unit office set up and adjudications were infrequent and few in number. At the time of our visit the hearings were being heard either in individual wing offices or the corridor outside the cells. The cell call system was a modern version that was patched through to B wing ensuring that any member of staff on duty there would be alerted.

We tested the system when staff were unaware that we were in the unit and the response was swift.

1.51 We examined all the cells. They were in immaculate condition having been barely used since they were handed over. The two normal cells were equipped with standard cell furniture which was bolted to the floors and walls. A stainless steel sanitary unit was connected on the end wall. **There was no privacy screen fitted. This should be addressed.**

1.52 Access to daylight, fresh air and ventilation was poor. The windows were small and fitted with solid glass bricks over which had been fastened a sheet of Perspex. We were told this had been a temporary measure to prevent a particular prisoner from chipping away at the bricks to furnish himself with a weapon. The prisoner had moved on but the Perspex was still there. This meant that there was effectively no access to fresh air and little in the way of ventilation. The window provided no possibility of viewing sunlight as much of this side of the building was in the shadow cast by the gymnasium. **These were unacceptable conditions for any prisoner. Access to daylight and fresh air to these cells should be improved.**

1.53 We spoke to the single occupant of the cells who told us that he was being well treated and given the opportunity to exercise and shower on a daily basis. Unless specifically determined by the Governor, prisoners held in segregation were allowed to take part in the normal visiting routines and religious services.

CHAPTER TWO

RESPECT

A Wing

2.01 This wing was on the point of change during our inspection. Previously used as induction and also to house prisoners on Basic regime, it was currently a standard residential wing and was in transition to becoming a Voluntary Testing Unit for prisoners who wished to remain drug-free.

2.02 The wing could take up to 56 and there were 45 accommodated on its three landings. Cells were of double occupancy and there was little space for storing belongings. Prisoners had to drape their clothes on hangers and there were few chairs or tables in cells. Many were quite dark inside. Otherwise the facilities were generally the same as for other wings

2.03 The wing was staffed by a Senior Officer and seven Officers, four of whom were detailed off the wing to Reception, Throughcare, Security and MDT. If there was evening association, three Officers were in attendance, otherwise only one Officer was on the wing and at night there was one OSG on A wing.

2.04 The daily routine on weekdays was as follows:

0730	staff on duty
0740	breakfast
0800 – 0845	exercise
0845	movement to labour/education
1200-1230	lunch
1340	movement to labour/education
1645	return and tea meal
1730	staff off duty
1800 – 2015	association on selected evenings
2030	patrol state

2.05 At weekends, times varied slightly. Breakfast was 0800 – 0815, exercise was 1015 – 1115 and association was 1330 – 1700 on Saturdays and Sundays.

2.06 The staff/prisoner relationships were good and fairly relaxed. Prisoners on A wing said that it was the place to be. All of them knew their personal officers and it was clear that prisoners felt able to approach staff at any time. There were none on Basic regime. We thought the IEP scheme was slightly compromised since doubling up in cells meant that those on standard regime sharing with those on enhanced received the benefit of in-cell TV. This may be resolved if the intention to provide in-cell TV for those on standard goes ahead.

2.07 On one day, 16 prisoners on A wing (35%) had no employment. This meant a long day in cell made even longer if there was no association that evening. Other prisoners had gone to education (11), welders (2), Works (2), DIY on the wing (1), cleaners/orderlies (4) and others (9).

2.08 Staff were fairly well motivated on A wing. They had been asked whether they wanted to remain on the wing when it became a VPU and many had volunteered to stay. However they often felt omitted from the information process. A meeting on the wing one afternoon failed to answer many of the basic and practical queries raised by staff. We got the impression as no further programme had been provided, that they felt rudderless.

2.09 It will be interesting to see whether A wing changes as a result of its new role. Much will depend on keeping staff informed and preparing, involving and supporting them for their new duties. Senior managers must take an active role in monitoring progress and resolving problems at an early stage. At this critical time they must be seen to be part of the wing team. Staff continued to look for guidance, support, reassurance, approbation and help. If senior managers can provide them, it will go a long way to bridging the gap that currently exists between residential staff and managers.

B Wing

2.10 First impressions were of space and light with daylight shining through skylights in the roof high above. The second was that the wing was in need of considerable refurbishment with many examples of peeling paint high in the roof and stained walls and floors showing where the roof was prone to leak.

2.11 It was the largest residential unit at Shepton Mallet and had a maximum capacity of 94 prisoners held in 79 cells. The roll at the time of our visit was 90. The wing was managed by a Senior Officer and two Officers. An extra Officer was available from time to time when his presence in the neighbouring Segregation unit was not required. This level of supervision was maintained throughout the day except at meal times when it was increased by staff returning from other duties to help lock up.

2.12 The accommodation was arranged on three landings. One side of the wing remained as single rooms, the other had a mixture of both shared and single cells. The size of the cells varied considerably. The smallest with red painted doors were very narrow and usually allocated to prisoners who had been placed on the basic level of privileges. The shared accommodation was in adequately sized cells arranged with the beds on either side of the room. All the cells were fitted with integral sanitation. The ceramic toilet was shielded by a low wooden screen which protected the user from anyone entering the cell unexpectedly but did nothing to preserve his privacy from the prisoner sharing this room. As the prison was low security there was no reason for this inadequate arrangement. **The screening arrangements should be improved.**

2.13 Pin-ups and pictures of family and friends were confined to the notice boards provided in each cell. A policy on the display of pornographic and offensive material had been recently put in place and a copy of the statement was pinned to one of the notice boards on the ground floor. However we found numerous examples of pictures which breached the policy. **The policy on the display of offensive material should be enforced.**

2.14 The condition of the cells was generally good as a group of prisoners were kept employed to paint cells and other areas on a continuous basis. The wooden cell doors were very old and almost all of them had a hole where the observation glass had originally been fitted. Prisoners had fitted their own privacy covers for these openings made out of the plastic lids from food containers secured to the door by shoelaces. Access to daylight and ventilation was poor. The only window in the room was small and set high in the wall. Heating was provided by the original Victorian plenum system and varied in its effectiveness.

2.15 All the rooms were supplied with low voltage electricity and aerial connections. Those prisoners who had gained the enhanced level of privileges were given an option to hire a television set at the weekly cost of £1. The sets received the usual five terrestrial channels and a video channel. Two prisoners had opted out of this privilege on the basis that they preferred to remain mentally stimulated by their own activities. 29 prisoners were on the enhanced level, 59 on standard and 2 on basic.

2.16 A daily regime was published on the wing notice board and it was followed with few cancellations or alterations. Exercise in the fresh air had been moved from the afternoon period and was now at 0800 on the adjoining exercise yard and shared with prisoners from A wing. It rarely lasted more than forty minutes and was followed by a general movement to labour and other activities. Those who had no activities or work or who were awaiting a medical appointment remained locked up on the wing. At the time of the inspection the number locked away on a daily basis varied from 23 to 38 prisoners.

2.17 Clothing and bedding changes took place once a week on a Thursday. Staff told us there was not sufficient clothing in the system to provide a daily change of underwear for every prisoner. When we checked, the problem appeared to be one of the correct amounts being returned after being laundered at another establishment. Staff told us this occurred on a fairly regular basis. **All prisoners should be supplied with enough clothing to allow a daily change of underwear.**

2.18 Wing staff did not have access to this room which was below ground level at the base of a stairwell. Kit from prisoners who were being discharged or transferred was simply dropped down this stairway until retrieved by the store men in charge of this process. This was a potential fire hazard. **The arrangements for the collection of prisoners' clothing on B wing should be reviewed.**

2.19 Meals were collected from the wing hotplate and consumed in the cells. Association took place on three or four evenings during the week, according to a pre-determined rota and during the day at weekends. There was a television and facilities to play pool or snooker. The main interest was access to the telephones and showers.

2.20 The two shower rooms were on the first and second floor. Each contained six shower heads. The condition of these rooms was poor and the standard of cleaning indifferent. The tiles on the floor were deeply stained with years of heavy usage, the walls damaged and attacked by damp and the ventilation was poor. **The showers on B wing should be refurbished.**

2.21 There were three wooden booths containing telephones on the ground floor. Access to these telephones was only allowed during association periods. As the whole wing, apart from those on the basic level of privileges, were unlocked for these periods, there was considerable demand by up to 94 prisoners when they were made available. Staff on another wing allowed the telephones to be switched on for most of the day allowing those remaining there during the day to use them. When we asked why this disparity existed we were given no adequate explanation. **Access to the telephones on B wing should be improved.**

2.22 We examined the wing records kept on individual prisoners and found few entries. Almost all that we did find were negative comments on prisoners. Even those who had reached the enhanced level had few remarks to justify them achieving that level other than time served on the standard level without negative annotations being made. Some of the

reasons given for reducing prisoners to basic level were trivial infringements of the wing routine. It was apparent that the Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) scheme was being used by some staff as a form of control rather than a method of encouraging good behaviour. Managers had recognised this trend and were putting in place a different monitoring system. **This should be pursued.**

2.23 The relationship between staff and prisoners was good. Staff were in control but in a friendly and relaxed manner. The atmosphere on the wing was friendly and welcoming. A personal officer scheme was nominally in place but there was little evidence of staff reaching out to get to know the problems and needs of the prisoners in their charge. Staff were very approachable but relied on the prisoners making applications which they then passed onto whatever area they thought might deal with them. Most of the enquiries could have been addressed by staff on the wing rather than deflecting them off to other people. **The personal officer scheme should be reviewed.**

2.24 We spoke to most of the prisoners on the wing who told us that they felt safe and looked after by the staff. There was not enough activity to engage and tire them out but neither where they challenged or aggravated by staff attitudes. In many ways it was an undemanding and boring existence in acceptable surroundings.

2.25 We were particularly struck by the indolence of the wing cleaners and the lack of staff encouragement to improve their efforts. The wing was grubby, with no cleaning schedules in place for any areas and we witnessed the same brushes and mops being used for both the shower, toilet and general association areas. With so many prisoners locked away on a daily basis without an activity to engage them and with up to seven prisoners employed as cleaners and orderlies, there was little excuse for these poor standards of hygiene. **The supervision of the cleaning party should be improved.**

C Wing

2.26 C wing was situated apart from the other two residential units and held up to 72 vulnerable prisoners. Almost half of these were sex offenders and many were in denial of their offence. The roll on the wing was maintained at around 70 there being 69 prisoners located on C wing at the time of our inspection.

2.27 There were fourteen prisoners on the enhanced level of the incentive scheme and none on basic. Staff said they tried to prevent any prisoner reaching that stage and the last time anyone on C wing was on basic was about three months ago.

2.28 Staffing levels consisted of up to five officers and a Senior Officer for mealtimes and unlocking/ locking up periods. The SO and all except two of the officers would then be deployed elsewhere in the prison for the bulk of the day leaving two officers to attend to the day to day running of the unit. The staffing group for the wing comprised of fourteen officers and three Senior Officers, who had designated tasks additional to their wing responsibilities. Overall responsibility lay with the Residential Principal Officer. None of the staff working on this unit had been especially selected or trained to deal with vulnerable prisoners.

2.29 The only employment available to prisoners on C wing was education, a textile workshop or orderly/ domestics jobs. There was only one unemployed prisoner on the wing at the time of the inspection, which was lower than other units. The range of activities available to these prisoners was restricted due to being unable to mix with those prisoners on normal location. For example they could not undertake the welding qualification or be employed on a general duties party.

2.30 There were plans to make the top floor landing of C wing a drug free area where occupants would undertake regular dip tests. Vulnerable prisoners do not generally present a problem of drug misuse and this was confirmed by our analysis of the MDT data. None of the prisoners on the unit had main offences which were specifically drug use related, although two were serving sentences for supplying. Both staff and prisoners told us there

was no real drug problem on the VPU so we were uncertain of the viability of having one landing drug free, although we appreciate all prisoners should have access to a drug free environment. **This plan should be reviewed.** A more viable use might be to change it into an enhanced landing with better cells and more privileges to encourage good behaviour with possibly acceptance of more frequent drug testing.

2.31 Very little work was being done to tackle offending behaviour on C wing. An ETS course was running on the wing specifically for C wing prisoners. The staff were very keen to be involved in setting up programmes which catered for their population, in particular providing courses for those that denied guilt for their offence. Prisoners tended to remain on C wing for slightly longer than their counterparts on the other units. Many were still with little time to do long and intensive programmes like the Sex Offenders Treatment Programme. Every attempt should be made to start these prisoners on the journey to addressing their offending behaviour. **A range of courses should be considered for these prisoners** such as anger management and those which deal with social and relationship skills and self esteem issues. **A detailed needs analysis of these prisoners should be done and every attempt made to address these needs.**

2.32 Prisoners on C wing were serving sentences ranging from nine months to ten years. The average stay at Shepton Mallet was around 12 months although we encountered some prisoners who had been there for two years. Seventeen prisoners were due to be released within the next three months; the average sentence being served was two years, although one prisoner was being released at the end of a six-year sentence. We spoke to some that were due for release soon and they told us they had had no preparation. **This is clearly unacceptable and a pre-release course should be provided.**

2.33 The relationships between staff and prisoners were good on C wing. Prisoners were happy to approach staff and they were generally helpful and polite in response. There was evidence that prisoners would tell staff if they were concerned about their fellow prisoners and staff were seen to act on this information. Entries in the wing observation

book and individual wing records suggested that the staff knew their prisoners and dealt with their needs appropriately. When we observed association the staff tended to congregate by the wing office and there was virtually no effort by staff to approach and interact with prisoners. However when they were approached they were helpful and good humoured.

2.34 There was a personal officer scheme on the wing, which appeared to operate well. Officers were responsible for about five prisoners each although there were plans to group the officers into fours in order to provide more contact points for the prisoners. Personal officers had input into the sentence planning process.

2.35 Staff on the wing were aware of the Schedule One offenders on their unit and of the issues surrounding them. There was a list kept in the office and all relevant procedures were in place.

2.36 The wing, which was a galleried design with three landings, was very clean and bright, including the cells. Most were double cells which were very spacious and with ample room for two prisoners. They were furnished with two beds, two lockers and a table and chair. All had in-cell electricity and integral sanitation, which was partitioned off by a half-partitioning wall. Each cell had a small window high on the far wall which was made up of bars which could be used as a ligature point. There were also seven single cells and two three man cells, one of which was used as a care suite.

2.37 There were two sets of showers on the wing one on each of the ones and twos landings, there being three or four showerheads in each. There were no privacy curtains but the areas were well maintained and very clean. The recess, which only contained one toilet, was also very clean but rarely used.

2.38 There was a large classroom on the unit that was currently being used for an ETS course. This was a very useful facility and provided an ideal base for offending behaviour courses and other wing based activities.

2.39 The notice boards on the wing displayed plenty of easy to read useful and relevant information. *We particularly liked the “who’s who” posters which gave a clear explanation of the role of various people and organisations within the establishment, such as the Chaplain, Samaritans and Race Relations Team.*

2.40 Prisoners on C wing had daily access to the gymnasium. Exercise was daily at 0800, immediately after breakfast. Very few prisoners went on exercise because, we were told, it was too close to breakfast and prisoners were not provided with a coat or jacket, unless they were over sixty years of age, to protect them from the cold and damp in the winter.

2.41 Association was on a rota basis with three evening association periods in some weeks and four on others. This rota was published on the wing and association was rarely cancelled. It was between 1800 and 2015 and prisoners had access to phones and showers at this time (although we were pleased to see prisoners who for a variety of reasons felt unable to shower at this time were given alternative access). There were three telephones on the wing, one on the ground floor close to the wing office and two along a passageway on the middle landing. **None of these had privacy hoods. This should be rectified.**

2.42 There was no booking system for the phone but this did not appear to cause any difficulties. Facilities on association comprised of a pool table, dartboard, table tennis and prisoners also had access to a toaster. There was a small TV room but this was not widely used as all but a few cells on the wing had in-cell television. Staff on the unit were enthusiastic and had many good ideas about how they would like to develop the VPU. It was felt management was not listening to these possible developments. This reflected the lack of vision for the wing. **A needs analysis should lead to a realistic regime, activities and how to deal with offending behaviour programmes. This should be pursued.**

2.43 We disagreed with the idea put forward that all Shepton Mallet should become a “Rule 45 jail”. We were impressed with the clarity that staff expressed these ideas. An important development to be considered would be a policy to integrate the prisoners on C wing with the rest of the population. There may be a need to provide a safe haven by continuing to house them on C wing. Prisoners we spoke to on C wing told us they had encountered few problems with the prisoners on normal location. We observed both groups in close proximity on visits and witnessed nothing between them that would cause us concern. C wing prisoners told us on the occasions they were in contact with those on other units such as visits, some religious services and in their capacity as Listeners no difficulties were perceived. If integration could be achieved the benefits for prisoners on C wing would be enormous. They would have the same access to activities, facilities and programmes as those in the rest of the establishment. In addition freeflow throughout the establishment would be easier to introduce. **We recommend that a policy of integration be considered.**

What we were told

During our inspections we listen to the views of many prisoners, staff and representatives from staff associations, individually and in groups. We believe this to be important and record what was said because they reflect the feelings of people living and working in the establishment. Where appropriate, we record our own findings alongside these comments, particularly those made by prisoners. However, it should not be assumed that where there are no such bracketed findings, views expressed by prisoners, staff and staff associations in the following paragraphs necessarily accord with our own judgements, these are to be found in the main body of the report.

2.44 We spoke to a group of twenty prisoners from A and B wings who had been at Shepton Mallet between two and thirteen months. Six of the group had not been in custody before. They told us :

- visits had recently been reduced to three times a week with only one day mid week available for prisoners to use their PVOs. This had put extra pressure on visitors and prisoners. Visitors had nowhere to wait before visits and there was usually a long delay for processing for visits. The searching of young children and babies was excessive and overbearing for a prison of this security category. Prisoners were often left waiting in the visits room for their visitors for long periods. Visitors had to leave the visits area to use the toilet and this took a long time. Booked visits made silly mistakes like booking two different lots of visitors for one prisoner on the same session
- the prison was classed as a Category C but staff ran it as a local prison enforcing petty rules on property
- there was a culture of laziness amongst staff. Everything requiring them to do something for them was too much trouble to get off their chairs. They were relaxed and easy to get on with because they were too lazy to have an argument
- foreign nationals were not allowed a free phone call home
- release on temporary licence (ROTL) rarely happened at all even for job interviews. Prisoners were released under the tagging system but not for ROTL. The process was long winded if it happened at all with spurious and unbelievable reasons put forward for refusing requests
- processing of paperwork was painfully slow. Applications for enhanced were seen by some staff as a challenge to their authority. IEP status at other establishments was ignored for up to eight weeks even if you were “super enhanced”
- there was inconsistent application of the rules particularly over IEP status
- middle managers were not effective with little vision and no responsibility for ensuring issues were taken forward or dealt with
- prisoners had gone past their tagging date without being processed. Reasons for refusal were inconsistent and unfair

- telephones were switched on at varying times on different wings. The pressure on telephones was huge with only three on B wing for 90 prisoners with limited association. Access to the telephones was further restricted during canteen nights when they coincided with association
- there was a canteen bagging system in place operated by Aramark from Guys Marsh. Prices of goods seemed very expensive with the same products like shower gel almost double the price here as in other prisons. Deficiencies and mistakes in the orders occurred weekly with promises by the contractor to rectify the omissions not honoured and prisoners still being charged for goods not received
- the new notice boards were only put up this week in time for the inspection
- there was no pre-release work available to prepare prisoners for release
- exercise in the fresh air was only available at 0800 hours immediately after breakfast and only lasted a maximum of 40 minutes
- there was a long wait to see the doctor
- there were few ethnic prisoners with television sets
- the portions at meal times were too small, the choice of dishes at week-ends was poor and too many chips were served on a regular basis. Crisps and other foods were thrown away because they were out of date rather than dish them out to prisoners. Quality of the food had gone down since the previous chef left
- wing routines were not always followed with association being started late and the telephones switched off early
- the PE programme choice was different for each wing
- sentence plans were not completed and the objectives not realistic.

What We Were Told; Prisoners on C Wing (VPU)

2.45 We met a group of ten prisoners on C wing. They were serving between 18 months and seven years and had been at Shepton Mallet for between one month and nine months. They told us the following;

- exercise was at 0800. This meant breakfast, which usually came onto the wing at about 0745, was rushed if they wanted to go onto exercise. No warm clothing was provided for example a coat or jacket unless they were over 60 years old and in the winter exercise was in the dark. In addition they only got half an hour. For these reasons very few prisoners went out on exercise
- canteen was on Wednesday evenings which was always an association night for C wing. They remained locked up while this was going on with only half a dozen coming out at a time to collect their canteen and then be locked away again. They were only let out for association when canteen had finished and was usually after 1900
- they were behind your door more than they would expect to be in a Category C prison. The staff just wanted to shut the door on them most of the time. There was no advantage in being at Shepton Mallet as it was more a B cat than a C cat. Even officers regarded it as such
- on Wednesday lunchtimes, treatments, lunch and kit change all occurred at the same time so there was no time to check their kit. Also, only one sweatshirt was issued and this had to be surrendered on a Wednesday morning before exercise and a new one was not issued until lunchtime. This meant going onto exercise with no sweatshirt
- prisoners on C wing only got woodwork once a week, which was less than the other wings
- association was arranged on wing rotation basis as the switchboard could not cope with the demand on the phones if all the wings were out at once
- if they had no designated purposeful activity they were locked up, although they were out on the wing if they did not want to go on exercise
- the food was good, although chips five times a week was too much

- the prison shop permitted the purchase of set packs of goods over Christmas. However there were things in these bags which no one wanted to buy. The prisoners offered alternative suggestions to the Governor but received no reply. The prices in the prison shop were too high and the goods were sometimes out of date. The blades of the hobby craft knives did not fit the handles, but both continued to be sold
- the wages in the textile shop and education were too low. At £6.50 the shop wages were half what they were two years ago
- the treatment of visitors was poor. It took a long time to process them and could take up to an hour for visitors to get in. There was only one mid week visits session. There was no visitors centre and a tiny waiting room within the prison was never used. Security was more rigorous than at a local prison. Visitors were treated like prisoners
- there were no problems from the prisoners on normal location when they had contact with them ,for example on visits and services. Any rifts between the two groups of prisoners were caused by staff
- throughcare did not exist. Staff were very slow at dealing with discharge grants and did not bother following up applications to get police days back. However they did all have sentence plans
- Shepton Mallet was like a “lobster pot” - easy to get into but hard to get out of. Prisoners were never given Category D status or home leave and there were only a few released on tagging
- all had personal officers and some individual officers were quite good. Help depended on how energetic they felt. They passed the buck easily
- “mediocrity” was the key word at Shepton Mallet. The staff and the Governors did just enough to get by
- the induction week was actually only about 40 minutes of activity. The rest of the time was spent locked in their cells. All attended induction such as it was.

Requests and Complaints

2.46 The system whereby prisoners could make an application about a request or complaint was fully understood by prisoners. Applications completed by prisoners were properly recorded and interim replies were sent to keep prisoners informed of progress. Replies from within the establishment were timely. Many were very comprehensive, courteous and relevant to the query. There were continuing lengthy delays for applications requiring a response from Prison Service headquarters and these should be chased.

Spiritual Activities

2.47 Three areas of the establishment were given over to spiritual activities. There was a large and well cared for Christian chapel. Above this was a multi faith room, which was adequate in size to accommodate significant numbers and thirdly a room given over for the sole use of Moslems which was called the mosque. All these areas were satisfactory, well looked after and *the establishment of a mosque was an example of good practice.*

2.48 The full time chaplain was from the Church of England and had been in post for 18 months. She was supported by a range of both Christian and other religious leaders. On the Christian side, the chaplain was sustained by an unpaid reader. Four hours were given by a Methodist chaplain helped by a volunteer and the Roman Catholic priest attended on Saturday mornings. Other visiting ministers covered the faiths of Hindu, Moslem, Jehovah Witness, Christian Science, Jewish, Buddhist and Mormon. A good leaflet was handed out for the Christian side and an excellent colourful one had been especially designed for prisoners of the Moslem faith.

2.49 The chaplain tried to see all new arrivals as soon as possible. But without a proper induction programme, this was difficult and some prisoners were missed. A range of Christian evening classes were provided, concentrating upon study groups. One of these was a parents' craft programme. This was linked into the education provision but when carried out within the Chaplaincy, was done within a Christian ethos.

2.50 The responsibility of the chaplain is to ensure that each prisoner, who wishes to have access to religious and spiritual activities, can do so. There was some confusion about how prisoners had access to the main services. This was clearly laid down in the regime of the establishment but each wing had a different method for identifying prisoners who wished to attend and how they should be escorted to the services. For an establishment of this security category, movement between areas of the establishment should be uncomplicated. **This needed to be addressed. Staff on the wing should ensure prisoners know the times of services and facilitate their access. Prisoners should also arrive on time,** a feature that was not happening at the time of the inspection.

2.51 Pastoral duties were carried out in the Chaplaincy area and also on the wings. The Chaplaincy team saw its responsibility as walking the landings and seeing prisoners in the areas, in which they lived and worked. The chaplain had an easy open manner, and prisoners knew they could approach her and issues raised would be properly discussed. As with all specialists, they required support from wing staff. It is the responsibility of wing staff to understand duties of specialists, and how they relate to the prisoners' lives. This is important as it creates a sense of teamwork and unity. **Although the Chaplaincy and staff got on well, it was clear that staff saw the work of the Chaplaincy as independent of them but a far closer working relationships should be developed. This would also help officers in developing their role as personal officers.**

Prison Shop

2.52 The prison shop was contracted out to ARAMARK, who were based at HMP Guys Marsh. Prisoners completed an order form which was issued to them on Fridays and indicated how much money they were entitled to spend that week. This form was collected by ARAMARK staff the following Monday. Goods were then delivered to the prison in sealed bags to be delivered to B wing on Tuesday evening and A and C wing on Wednesday evenings. A representative from ARAMARK was available on these evenings to deal with any queries.

2.53 There were few complaints about the shop from prisoners except that they considered the goods to be too highly priced. The time their goods were delivered to them was also criticised as they felt the time taken to complete the process was unnecessarily delayed and decreased the time they had on association. (Canteen was always delivered on association nights.) We observed the process on C wing and A wing. The system of delivering the prisoners goods to them was well ordered and effective; it took around twenty minutes. Prisoners were let out of their cells, came down to the point where they collected their goods, checked them and then returned to their cells where they were locked up again until association commenced. This procedure, although unpopular with prisoners, minimised the chances of prisoners having goods taken from them before they could get them to their cells.

2.54 The range of goods available was substantial, with around 230 different items on offer including fresh fruit. We were also impressed with the wide range of goods available for prisoners from ethnic minority groups. The price list was readily accessible to prisoners as it formed part of their order form and a list of special products was displayed on the wings.

2.55 Prisoners on reception to Shepton Mallet were given an advance of canteen. (See section on Reception). However this was expected to last him until the next delivery of goods onto his unit. This could sometimes be over a week, for example if he arrived on a Tuesday as the order form had to be in on a Monday. **Systems should be put in place to cater for new receptions so they do not have to wait an excessively long time to purchase goods from the canteen.**

2.56 We were told by the administrative staff responsible for the prisoners' shop that each prisoner **could only order one carton of orange juice per week** in case they used it illicitly. **This decision seemed extreme and should be reviewed.**

Catering

2.57 The Catering Department was adapting to a new catering manager after the departure of the civilian catering manager shortly before the Prison Service audit team arrived. The audit had criticised the lack of systems in place and the general management of hygiene in the kitchen and other relevant areas. In the intervening period a new catering manager had been appointed and it was apparent considerable effort had been put in by both catering and other staff to raise the standards of hygiene throughout the establishment.

2.58 The catering team consisted of a Catering Senior Officer assisted by three Catering Officers and a part-time civilian cook. A full time civilian cook post had not been filled at the time of the inspection but the Personnel Department were in the process of attempting to recruit one. Nine prisoners were employed to help prepare the meals, all of whom had received the required training in health and hygiene. **No certificated training was available for these employees** although there were plans to introduce them at some time in the future. **This should be pursued.**

2.59 Meals once cooked in the kitchen were loaded onto pre-heated metal trolleys to be taken off to the various wing based serveries. ***The standard of cleaning for these trolleys was the best we have seen*** for many inspections. Prisoners employed in the wing serveries were encouraged to maintain this standard by the bonus of a cake prepared in the kitchen.

2.60 The layout of the kitchen was cramped and allowed little room for manoeuvre between the various bits of machinery and for the preparation of food. The machinery was adequate for the task and appeared to be well maintained. **The protective paint on the floor was showing signs of heavy use in places and needed to be replaced. This should be addressed.**

2.61 The catering team had some way to go before achieving the targets set by the auditors but were well on the path to introducing cleaning schedules and safe systems of work. We found the kitchen to be generally clean, staff and prisoners working there dressed in clean protective clothing that had been donned in the kitchen and a system for the correct rotation of stock introduced. A product of good quality was being produced on a regular basis by a small but enthusiastic brigade.

2.62 A pre-select choice system was in place based on a three week menu cycle. *We observed the serving of numerous meals on the various units and **were impressed by the quality of food being served**, (apart from the boiled potatoes which were universally poor) **the presentation of the individual dishes, the size of the portions and the temperature of the food being collected even at the end of the serving period.***

2.63 The wing-based serveries had recently been refurbished and were kept immaculately clean. Food was served by prisoners in protective clothing, disposable gloves and hats who assured us they had received the necessary training in health and hygiene. We saw the various dishes being probed and the temperatures carefully recorded on a sheet of paper. On one occasion the effect was spoiled as we watched a prisoner on one wing carefully wipe the probe between dishes on his immaculate white jacket despite there being a supply of disposable hygienic wipes available in his cell.

2.64 Prisoners changed into their protective clothing in their cells and were prone to wander about the establishment so attired in between their servery duties. Stricter controls were required. Nor were there any facilities other than the wash basin in the cells sited next to the toilet for prisoners to wash their cutlery in between meals. This pointed to a lack of knowledge and supervision from staff on these units, few of whom had received any training in health and hygiene. None of the staff we observed handling food wore protective clothing. **All staff should be trained in health and hygiene issues. The supervision of the hotplates should be improved.**

Health Care

2.65 The health care service at HMP Shepton Mallet was undergoing very extensive reorganisation at time of our inspection. The service, which offered a primary care and consulting service, had been found to be deficient during the recent standards audit. This had resulted in a review of the service and extensive changes in staff. The physical location of the service was also being changed. Under these circumstances it was not sensible to conduct a normal formal inspection of the health care service but it seemed likely that the changes that were being made, when completed, would produce a service better suited to the needs of prisoners.

2.66 Very serious questions arise however as to how the service had been allowed to deteriorate to the levels that it was clear had been found during the standards audit. The health care service had been contracted out in 1998 to MEDACS (an independent sector staffing agency) and we had made available to us such documentation as the prison possessed about the nature of the service that the prison was contracting for. We were not shown a formal contract but rather a service description written by the provider with some amendments made by the Prison Service. The service description did not appear to be based on an assessment by the Prison Service of the need for health care in the prison as is required by the Health Care Standards but rather was based on a description by the provider of what service they believed to be required. The service description contained outline information on the method by which the provider intended that service should be monitored. **We saw no information about how the contractor considered the service should be monitored. This was an unsatisfactory basis for contracting for health care.**

2.67 If the monitoring arrangements had been followed it seemed to us unlikely that the problems that had occurred in the service would have developed as they did. But we saw no evidence that monitoring had indeed taken place and, if it had done, we suspect that it had been limited simply to attendance rates of the various staff involved. What, of course,

had been needed was monitoring also of the quality of care that was being provided but we saw no evidence that this had even been contemplated let alone implemented.

2.68 We have noted in other reports of the inadequacies of the current arrangements for setting and monitoring of health care contracts with independent providers. The situation that had obtained at Shepton Mallet appeared to be yet another instance where lack of skill in setting and monitoring contracts has resulted in an inadequate service for prisoners. **It is essential in the future, for health care at Shepton Mallet to be effectively monitored. NHS health authorities now are responsible for ensuring that prisons are included in their health improvement programmes. The Governor should enter early discussions with the Chief Executive of the local health authority with view to developing a better system for contracting and monitoring health care services. For the future, contracts should be based on needs assessment and monitoring should involve surveillance of standards as well as simply monitoring attendance rates.**

Pharmacy

2.69 The provision of health care in the prison had also been contracted out to MEDAC. We were told that until recently working systems had been poor and all the existing staff had left late in 1999. From December a new Health Care Manager had been appointed, and she was assisted by two full time nurses. The pharmaceutical service was provided from HMP Bristol. No pharmacist was employed at HMP Shepton Mallet. The medical service was provided by a local GP practice.

2.70 The medical centre was open from 7.30am to 5.30pm. Medicines were distributed from 8 to 8.45am and 4.45 to 5.15pm. A further distribution took place at 12 noon for any prisoners that required medication at lunchtime. Medicines were distributed solely from the medical centre. There was no distribution at all from the wings.

Premises and Equipment

2.71 At the time of the inspection the pharmacy was being re-located to another room, so some disruption was inevitable. Even so the pharmacy was reasonably tidy. The room was fairly small but will probably be adequate as most of the preparation of dispensed items took place at HMP Bristol. Medicines were stored neatly in cupboards. The cupboards were not lockable. I was told that it was possible that new more functional cupboards might be obtained. **Lockable cupboards should be installed for the storage of medicines.**

2.72 Internal and external products were clearly separated, as were patient specific, in possession from stock items and pre-packs. Labelling of all these products appeared to be clear and thorough. The Health Care Manager had, on her appointment found gross over stocking of medicines and dressings, and had cleared large quantities of date expired and excess stock. I saw boxes of such material awaiting removal. As a result stocks at the time of the inspection were low. Stock for destruction was returned to HMP Bristol.

2.73 A refrigerator was in place but there was no record of fridge temperatures. **A maximum/minimum thermometer should be obtained and a daily written record maintained of the refrigerator temperatures.**

2.74 Reference books in the form of the British National Formulary (BNF) and Monthly Index of Medical Specialities (MIMS) were present. Medicines were issued through a hatchway situated at eye level and through bars. *Security was good.* In the event of a drug alert or recall, information is received through mailing from the Medicines Control Agency (MCA).

2.75 A stock list was present which had been introduced very recently following consultation with the pharmacist at HMP Bristol. A prescribing formulary was present. This had been reviewed in December 1999 and was due for further revision in February 2000.

Supply of Medicines

2.76 The doctor used the Prescription and Administration Record Sheet (HR013 5/96). Prescriptions were then faxed to HMP Bristol to be dispensed. Those faxed by Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons were delivered late on Tuesday, Thursday and Monday mornings. Delivery was by taxi in locked containers.

2.77 Should it prove necessary to supply a prisoner with medication before it could be obtained from HMP Bristol, the doctor made out the prescription in the usual way, and then pre-packs prepared by HMP Bristol were used. These were dual labelled. One of the labels was removed and attached to a sheet of paper ready for return to HMP Bristol. The other label remained attached to the medicine and suitably annotated with the prisoner's name etc. **The removed label should be carefully attached to the prescription form and faxed to HMP Bristol so that the pharmacist can check that the correct medicine has been dispensed.** The number of items dispensed by staff had greatly reduced since the change of staff in December.

2.78 Inspection of the prescription forms revealed that some had not been dated by the doctor. **All prescriptions should be dated by the doctor.**

2.79 There was a detailed In-Possession policy drawn up by the doctor staff and pharmacist from HMP Bristol. It was currently under review at the time of inspection. The Venalink monitored dosage system was being introduced for In-Possession prisoners at the time of inspection. Some In-Possession prisoners were receiving daily dosages in Henley Bags. **The use of Henley Bags should be phased out in favour of conventional containers or Venalink.**

2.80 There was a very thorough and extensive special sick formulary. The prescription forms of the prisoners supplied with medicines on special sick appeared to have been fully annotated. There was no detox programme at the time of the inspection, although there appeared to be plans to introduce one in the future.

Out of Hours Provision

2.81 When the pharmacy was closed the keys were deposited at the prison gate in a pouch within a locked key box. In an emergency there was a call system. First call would be to the nurse, or a second call to the doctor. The keys would be retrieved from the prison gate where records were kept by staff. As far as I could tell the authorised person wishing to use the key did not have to sign for it. An officer would then escort the authorised person to the pharmacy. **A logbook should be maintained and signed by all authorised persons requesting use of the pharmacy key out of hours. A written procedure with regard to out of hours provision should be drawn up.**

2.82 There was no emergency supply cabinet in the dispensary. **An emergency supply cabinet should be provided. Stock for use in the cabinet should be selected by consultation with the pharmacist at HMP Bristol. A written procedure should be drawn up for use of the emergency cabinet.**

2.83 A resuscitation kit was present in the treatment room. Contents were checked weekly but there was no **written evidence available for these checks and there should be.**

Controlled Drugs

2.84 No controlled drugs are held at the prison.

Development of Pharmacy Services

2.85 The staff seemed motivated and doing a good job following what must have been a poor period in medical service at the prison. There appeared to be good liaison with the pharmacist at HMP Bristol. However, it appeared that the pharmacist only visited at irregular intervals. **The pharmacist from HMP Bristol should try to visit the prison at monthly intervals, to advise and generally oversee the provision of the pharmacy service.**

Dental Services

2.86 Dental care was provided under the same private contract as the rest of the service and not under The National Health Service (GDS) regulations. The contract allowed for 36 sessions a year of 3 hours duration. Waiting lists appeared to be reasonable, emergencies being seen at the next available session and new patients within 2 to 3 weeks.

2.87 The surgery had recently been relocated from the Health Care Centre into a large, newly decorated room. It had been equipped to a high standard with new equipment, work surfaces and cabinetry sterilization was by means of autoclave and the certification of equipment was current and complete. However, the old flooring of vinyl tiles had not been replaced. These were lifting in places and inter-tile spaces were not sealed. There was debris on the surgery floor. **The provision of seamless, vinyl, flooring would meet current standards and a regime of thorough, regular, cleaning should be agreed and monitored.**

2.88 There was no dedicated waiting room, patients were left waiting, standing in the corridor. **This is unsatisfactory. A waiting room during dental sessions or seating in the adjacent corridor should be provided.**

2.89 Whilst oxygen was available in the dental surgery, no emergency drug kit or airways were available. This was a particular concern as assistance from the health care centre and its available facilities was some distance away. **An emergency drug kit together with suitable airways should be provided.**

2.90 There was no telephone point in the surgery and the emergency call button was located at a considerable distance from the working area. **A telephone and a more appropriately placed emergency call button should be provided.**

2.91 Medical records were made available to the Dental Practitioner, however, medical histories were not recorded on the dental records. **Medical histories should be recorded and updated on dental record cards.**

2.92 Apart from referrals to the medical officer no provision was in place for the treatment of dental emergencies between the Dental Practitioner's sessions or during any other absence. **Suitable procedures should be drawn up for the provision of 'out of hours' emergency dental treatment.**

2.93 There was no suitable storage container for endodontic instruments or mercury spillage kit. **The provision of a suitable storage container for endodontic instruments together with a mercury spillage kit should be provided.**

2.94 Overall the service provided by the Practitioner and his surgery assistant was good, efficient, clinical teamwork.

CHAPTER THREE

PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY

Employment

3.01 Employment opportunities at Shepton Mallet comprised of education (which was the largest employer), a VTC Welding shop, a general maintenance party called the DIY group and a textile shop as well as a variety of orderly and domestic employment. If the prison was full and all the employment places taken there would still be a shortfall of around forty employment places. Mid morning during the inspection we checked the whereabouts of all the prisoners.

3.02 An analysis showed that 99 prisoners were at their place of employment out of a roll that day of 208. An additional 28 were occupied in the gymnasium and 10 were participating in an Enhanced Thinking Skills course. Nine prisoners were officially unemployed.

3.03 Of the remainder, 22 were locked in their cells on A wing, 28 on B wing and 5 on C wing. The reasons for this were induction, sickness, unemployment and not being required at their place of work. There were an additional 19 who remained on their wings waiting to see the doctor. **This was a waste of scarce activity opportunities.** In an establishment of this security category, **prisoners should be** able to move from their place of work to attend appointments as required and then be **held responsible for returning to those positions**. They should not be confined to their cells to await collection. **The arrangements for moving prisoners to work and activities should be reviewed. More use should be made of the employment activities offered. Parties should be filled to their maximum capacity thus limiting the number of prisoners locked in their cells during the day.**

3.04 Attempts were being made to expand the variety of work on offer and a pilot scheme for filling envelopes was due to start shortly on C wing. Other schemes including those provided by outside companies were being considered. **We would encourage the expansion of work provision within Shepton Mallet to provide increased opportunities and variety.**

3.05 The textile or tailors shop was located above reception and provided employment for C wing prisoners only. This was a spacious clean area with many more machines than prisoners to work them. Two officer instructors ran this shop. The problems associated with prisoners employed were openly discussed either to create a production line approach with the view to instilling some sort of work ethos into the shop or recognition that the work was unpopular and that low pay created no realistic encouragement. **We would support any attempts to create a working environment which mirrors the working conditions prisoners could expect on release.** Even if they left with no qualifications at least the prisoners would understand the requirements of a working environment.

3.06 There was little variety of work within the textile shop with the main contract being making shorts for the Prison Service. Some attempts had been made to obtain other work, for example prisoners had been making hand puppets for charity, but these were few and far between. As one prisoner remarked “at least we will go out knowing how to make shorts”. Another told us that “the work was tedious and boring but it was better than being locked up in a cell”. An instructor had tried to pursue other contracts so that the prisoners could learn additional skills such as buttonholing. **This effort should be supported,** as it not only provides much needed variety but enables prisoners to expand their skills.

3.07 Attendance in the shop was low, with twenty prisoners present at the time of our visit. Prisoners said the reason was the low wages and education was easier. There was also a chance to achieve bonuses in education. If individual prisoners did not achieve satisfactory production their wages were docked and this extra money was used as a bonus for those who achieved more. The low numbers in the party hindered the aim to incorporate

some sort of production line into the workshop. When we visited only a few of the prisoners were working, the rest were in groups drinking tea and chatting. We even saw one prisoner smoking which is not advisable in a textile workshop. In the mean time an instructor was ironing fabric pieces. **A proper work ethos should be cultivated within this workshop.**

3.08 The DIY party was made up of a group of prisoners who did various decorating projects around the establishment, and included the wing painters. They appeared to be well led by their instructor and carried out their tasks enthusiastically. However, there was little co-ordination between this group and the Works Department. There were plans to give the group a classroom as a base in order to provide classroom training. **We support this idea and suggest prisoners spend time classroom based learning the skills necessary, perhaps completing a painting and decorating course, then move onto the Works Department where these skills can be utilised.**

3.09 There was little opportunity for prisoners to gain qualifications at their place of work, unless they were employed in education or in the welding shop where some of the qualifications gained were of a high standard. A level 2 NVQ used to be available in the textile shop but this training appeared to have lapsed as only one had achieved a qualification in the last year. There was nothing available for those in the DIY party. Although we appreciate many of the population were short term and may not have the time to undertake complete a certificated course, **consideration should be given to giving prisoners access to as many modules featuring certificated training as possible.**

3.10 We were impressed with the system of job allocation. Prisoners were seen on the first day of their induction, assessed and interviewed by education. They were asked their employment preferences. They were then seen by sentence planning staff, usually the following week, and allocated work which was consistent with their sentence planning targets. We encountered one prisoner who was not interested in attending education but

whose sentence plan indicated he was in need of basic skills. He was given a part time job with the proviso he also attended education.

Education

The Education Contract

3.11 The Education Contract was one of nine held by Strode College. There were good links between the Education Department and the Contact Manager, and regular meetings were held to co-ordinate policy and review the scope and quality of provision. Approximately six per cent of inmates attended education full-time and 57 per cent part-time. The opportunity for students to attend either full or part-time provided a welcome degree of flexibility for individual inmates. Education was the main provider of employment in the prison some inmates were obliged to follow educational programmes against their will, since no alternative employment was available. In some cases this resulted in a lower level of student motivation.

Induction and needs assessment

3.12 The Education Department had developed a well thought-out structure for identifying the needs of new arrivals to the prison and, at the time of the inspection, took the lead in all aspects of the induction process. The Education Co-ordinator interviewed all new arrivals, administered appropriate basic skills and dyslexia diagnostic tests, and provided prisoners with information about the education and training opportunities available to them. The system worked generally well on A and B wings, but provision for C wing prisoners was less thorough, mainly because accommodation constraints limited the depth and scope of some induction interviews. **Steps should be taken to ensure that the quality of induction processes is equally good on all three wings.**

3.13 There was generally a high degree of satisfaction on the part of the inmates concerning induction procedures and learning support sessions were held to review the process and finalise the courses to be followed by inmates. Due to the disappearance of a

formal induction course the Education Department became the main contributor to helping prisoners to be assessed and inducted. **This was not a satisfactory situation.**

Procedures should be reviewed to ensure joint responsibility for induction.

3.14 In general, the methods used to identify new arrivals' basic skills needs were thorough and reliable, and the documentation supporting the analysis of need was very good. All prisoners were interviewed on arrival in the establishment. The Education Department made good provision for prisoners at entry and basic levels, and was also able to cater well for advanced students capable of working independently.

3.15 The Education Department drew up detailed learning plans for all prisoners, whether they had opted to follow educational courses or not, and these were then integrated within the overall sentence plans. The transfer of records from other establishments, however, was slow, unreliable, and at times did not take place at all. This had obvious implications for the continuity of educational provision in Shepton Mallet for individual inmates, and it remains a persistent weakness within the National Prison Educational System. ***The quality of the needs analysis procedures and recording systems within Shepton Mallet's Education Department were exemplary.***

Standards and quality

3.16 The standard of attainment of inmates was generally high on both vocational and academic courses, and no unsatisfactory work was seen. On a level three communication skills course, for example, students who were three months into the course were seen making confident, reasoned contributions to group discussions. Students on a basic skills Numberpower and Wordpower course were achieving standards which showed the extent of the progress they had made since the course's beginning. The gains in knowledge and understanding made by some inmates on a level two/three key skills information technology course were at times outstanding, and some students, working to a lively pace dictated by their own sense of ambition, were capable of proceeding rapidly to higher levels. The quality of work seen on some National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses – for

example, welding and woodcraft - was equally high, and inmates showed themselves capable of reaching the standards set by their instructors and setting themselves demanding personal targets.

3.17 The majority of inmates were generally well-motivated and, alongside vocational and academic qualifications, had acquired the growth in personal confidence and self-esteem necessary if they are to stand a chance of successfully reintegrating into society. They were helped in this by the well-run student councils that had been set up to allow students to participate actively in the educational process and provide them with a means of airing their concerns. These meetings took place at regular intervals and minutes were produced.

3.18 The department had understood the need to motivate inmates through providing courses leading to some form of national accreditation, and students following vocational NVQ courses were clear that the opportunity to gain qualifications with well-understood currency in the labour market was of vital importance. The department offered well-regarded and successful courses in woodcraft and welding, but there was still scope for expansion of NVQ provision into, for example, industrial cleaning and brickwork. **There was also a need to ensure that the NVQ catering course was thoroughly taught and assessed according to course specifications and that it was properly supported by appropriate key skills teaching. This should be addressed.**

3.19 Continuity of learning programmes, student progression, and high standards of achievement were helped by the fact that relatively little time was lost for operational reasons, or because the Education Department failed to meet its obligations. However, punctuality at the beginning of lessons was often poor, and some time was lost because movement patterns within the prison generally were not sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of the four-session teaching day. In a Category C prison it should be possible to allow the greater freedom of movement necessary to allow inmates to attend all their education sessions for the required time.

3.20 Student progress was systematically monitored: attainment grades were recorded at the end of every lesson; they were regularly monitored and, through their link with payment, they acted as a powerful incentive on inmates to attend regularly and work consistently. An additional incentive was the guarantee to all inmates that they had the opportunity of gaining a certificate within eight weeks of beginning a course.

3.21 *The quality of teaching was generally high, and no poor teaching was seen. The positive learning atmosphere in the Education Department was strongly supported by a prison ethos that showed clearly the value placed on education, and by the good relations that existed between the Prison Senior Management, Prison Officers and Education staff.*

Curriculum

3.22 The curriculum at Shepton Mallet met the Prison Service National Core Curriculum, and concentrated heavily on the provision of basic skills. For example, despite the attempts made to incorporate wider elements of the curriculum – for example, drama and music - into existing subject areas or through extra-curricular activities, there was insufficient, mainstream provision of arts and creative subjects. At the time of the inspection there were no evening or weekend classes. **This time could be used to broaden the curriculum and provide more courses of a creative and recreational nature .** There was an imbalance between provision for inmates on A and B wings and for those on C wing: **the department should take the opportunity offered by the proposed accommodation changes to ensure equality of opportunity and provision for all inmates.**

3.23 The flexible timetable gave inmates good opportunities to take part in education and follow individually-tailored programmes and, in those courses that were offered, the provision in classrooms and training workshops was generally well-matched to inmates' differing needs, The Help-Mates scheme where prisoners less skilled were assisted by their peers provided good opportunities for inmates to help each other. Given the constraint that

there were insufficient workshops, the balance between full and part time was satisfactory, but overall too few inmates were involved in work.

3.24 The main curriculum weakness was in the provision for inmates requiring courses at General Certificate of Further Education (GCSE) or equivalent level, or academic courses at level three. Consequently, some inmates who had completed basic or entry-level courses had no clear progression route open to them. The relatively short period of stay of many inmates no doubt posed problems. Where there is a demand, **the department should make better provision for inmates to progress to higher levels of achievement**, even if this means that they will complete courses elsewhere. On the other hand, the needs of higher-attaining students who could work independently were well met, and some were supported through Prisoner Education Trust grants.

3.25 Despite the absence of any learning and teaching policy, the Education Department was managed in a highly effective way by the co-ordinator and senior staff. They had the clear aim of making good quality education available to as many inmates as possible, and had created a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere that was conducive to learning. **There was some confusion between the College and Department about the Staff Development Policy, and this needs to be dealt with if there is to be a coherent link between the Contractor's and Department's policies and the identification of staff training needs**. There were relatively few opportunities for the staff to gain professional support and further their personal development outside the small group of prisons with which Shepton Mallet was associated. **The Contractor and the Prison Education Department should work together to minimise any sense of isolation felt by staff and provide them with broader and extended professional training opportunities.**

3.26 There were no links with the Careers Education Companies and little appropriate careers literature available. **This aspect of the provision should be improved**

3.27 There was good support for basic skills needs within some vocational training courses. This operated well, for example, on the welding and woodwork NVQ courses, but not yet on the NVQ catering course, where the key skills support teacher had not received the portfolio documentation from the awarding body.

3.28 **There were no pre-release courses, job clubs or other vocational guidance, with the exception of Firm Start: this was a significant weakness that needs to be remedied.** Education staff did their best to fill this gap within the limits of the time they had available, and throughcare was developing an information and resource centre to provide inmates with employment guidance and advice and establishing links with Somerset Employment Service.

Resources

3.29 The four full-time, two fractional, and 17 part-time members of staff were appropriately qualified and deployed. The classrooms in the Education Block were bright, spacious and well maintained, but they were inaccessible to inmates with mobility problems. **There was scope for improving the quality of display, both for its own sake and also in order to demonstrate the quality of inmates' work.**

3.30 There were occasional difficulties with the separation of C block prisoners from the others during movements in the Education Department, and education staff felt uncomfortable about accepting responsibility for the separation of prisoners. The issue of prisoner movement to and from education, and within the Department itself, should be viewed within the broader context of the development of prison policy.

3.31 Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) were satisfactory for level 2 work, but the software not always adequate for more advanced level 3 work. Extra money has recently been made available to purchase new ICT equipment, but there is still likely to be an issue over the replacement of ageing equipment.

3.32 The equipment in training workshops was suitable overall; it was well supervised and maintained and care was taken to ensure its proper use by inmates.

3.33 *The management of the Education Department within the prison was excellent;* documentation was well organised, and all staff had clear learning plans for individual lessons as well as for long-term schemes of work. Administrative support was equally good, and this contributed significantly to the smooth running of the department. However, there was only one person providing this crucial support. **Regular, part-time help should be provided to ensure continuity in the case of absence or sickness.**

3.34 All students had individual learning plans. They were motivated by the sense of purpose this gave them and clearly valued the course accreditation and qualifications that they had the opportunity of gaining.

3.35 Despite the occasional shortcomings mentioned in the course of this report, the clear impression emerged that this was a prison which valued highly the role that education can play in providing prisoners with marketable qualifications and raising their confidence and self-esteem. It promoted a culture which was generally highly supportive of education. One telling detail illustrates this: when officers came to take prisoners away from a class for some reason they did so politely, and in a way that showed they had respect for both teachers and prisoners. Such respect for the educational process is not by any means universal in the prison system.

Library

3.36 The Library was a small but welcoming room, well cared-for and stocked with an adequate, although not generous, supply of mainly fictional works. The professional Librarian ensured the efficient running of the library, but her time was limited and the Library was open only at week-ends, and on one additional day for A and B wing prisoners on education. However, all inmates did have a reasonable opportunity of borrowing books on at least one occasion a week, even if the time for choosing books was limited. **The library**

should be open more frequently, and access should be equally good for inmates on all wings.

3.37 Regular statistical returns were made, but there was no electronic system of monitoring the pattern of loans. There were, however, good arrangements for ordering books not held by the Prison Library. Provision was poor for inmates with reading difficulties, and there was little authoritative, up-to-date information on careers, training and employment opportunities. **There was considerable scope for extending the role played by the Library as a resource centre to support learning, and developing it to go beyond its current role, which was primarily that of a provider of fictional reading material.**

Physical Education

3.38 The PE Department was based in a large building which had originally been the prison chapel and converted for its current use in 1983. The facilities were good for the size of prisoner population and well maintained apart from a lack of a suitable area to exercise in the fresh air. The only space available was the small general exercise yard between A and B wing. This had an uneven and slippery surface and sporting activities were further restricted by a small building housing toilets. This was a severe restriction and one that could be overcome by **demolishing the toilet block and replacing the tarmac area with an all weather surface. This should be considered.**

3.39 The gymnasium was on three levels. The ground floor contained offices, a large changing area, storage facilities and two exercise rooms. One of these rooms was used for weights, the other contained a multi-gym and various pieces of exercise machinery. The ventilation in these two rooms was poor and neither had access to natural light or fresh air. We visited on a particularly cold day and found both areas hot and stuffy with no heating on. We were told the conditions became almost unbearable in the summer months. **Plans had been prepared to provide ventilation through two openings that had been blocked off. These should be pursued.**

3.40 The changing room was a large bright tiled room with a walk through shower. It was kept very clean despite heavy use by the team of prisoners employed as part of the NVQ course. The storage areas were barely sufficient to contain the equipment and kit present but were well organised to maximise the available capacity. On arrival prisoners were issued with a numbered sports kit including sports shoes. These were collected at the end of each session and sent away to be laundered.

3.41 On the next level reached by a wide flight of stairs was a small sports hall which was marked out for various team and individual activities. Daylight shone through glass panels in the roof which also was prone to leak. We were told **plans had been prepared to repair the leaks and obscure the clear glass to reduce the dazzle effect which occurred in bright sunlight conditions. These should be pursued.**

3.42 The top floor, part of the original balcony, had been converted as changing facilities for female staff; this was an excellent facility and kept very clean. It was occasionally used by other staff if the main changing facilities were being occupied by prisoners. Staff on staggered meal breaks were encouraged to join in general PE classes and were welcomed by prisoners. The weights area was only available for staff if there was a PEI present to supervise.

3.43 Access to PE started with the induction sessions held on a Monday afternoon. ***Every prisoner received an afternoon introduction to the department which included a tour of the facilities and was handed a small pocket guide with a timetable of the PE programme. This was good practice.***

3.44 The timetable was also displayed on every wing notice board. All prisoners had daily access to the facilities and the programme was a popular activity with most prisoners who valued the commitment of the small group of PE staff. The timings of PE classes was integrated to the working day so as to maximise time spent in the gym. Evening classes

were restricted to one session of 90 minutes three times a week and the weekend sessions were confined to mornings only. An examination of the department's returns revealed that over 54% of the population used the facilities.

3.45 The department was managed by a Senior Officer PEI assisted by two Officer PEIs. This was barely sufficient to operate a full programme and access to the sports facilities was reduced if any of the team was absent for any reason. Two staff had been trained as sports and games officers but were rarely deployed to assist in the delivery of PE sessions. The PE programme had been redesigned to take account of the planned drug rehabilitation unit and they were waiting to introduce the changes. The stimulation of exercise is an important part of any successful drug rehabilitation course and without extra help the changes inevitably meant that access for the rest of the population would be reduced. Access for the whole prison needed to be expanded in view of the lack of other activities especially in the evenings and at week ends. **Funding should be provided for an extra PEI. Until this is provided, sports and games staff should be deployed to ensure the full PE programme is provided for prisoners.**

3.46 PE staff were running accredited courses for a small number of prisoners and hoped to expand this to a larger group once staff resources were made available. The small group enabled the qualifications to run alongside delivery of the full programme without interrupting access to other prisoners. This was a sensible approach but **the numbers of prisoners receiving accredited training should be increased.**

3.47 There was an adequate first aid kit kept in the office but no blood spillage kit. This was ordered during our visit. All the staff were fully qualified as first aiders, although two of the team would require refresher training in the forthcoming year to remain qualified. **This should be addressed.**

3.48 Overall the quality of the PE programme was good and morale amongst the small staff excellent. The service they provided was a vital part of the core regime and allowed

every prisoner the chance to burn off surplus energy on a daily basis. PE staff were keen to do more and had taken **a leading role in the practical implications of re-launching the anti-bullying strategy. This should be pursued.**

CHAPTER FOUR

LINKS WITH FAMILIES AND PREPARATIONS FOR RELEASE

Visits

4.01 Visits took place on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons between 1400 and 1600. There was a booking system in operation and the line was open each weekday morning between 0900 and 1100. Visits could be booked up to 14 days in advance and up to 24 hours prior to when they wished to visit. Visitors we spoke to said they had no trouble getting through on this line to book visits. They could also book for future visits when they attended the prison on visiting days. Most said they had received an information leaflet from the prison to tell them about visiting procedures. This was good. Prisoners were allowed two visits per month with additional privilege visits awarded depending on their level on the incentive scheme. Staff told us that in practice the duration of visits for those prisoners on the basic regime level were not reduced in any way although in theory they were only supposed to have the minimum of half an hour.

4.02 A newly refurbished visits room had opened recently and was designed in such a way as to minimise the amount of drugs entering the establishment. It was of adequate size and a maximum of 28 visits plus four closed visits could take place during any session. When we observed visits there were 21 visits taking place which we were told was about the average number. The room was very well decorated and reasonably clean and bright. **It was however sparse with little information on display. More use could be made of the wall space to display posters and information which may be of use to prisoners and their visitors.**

4.03 The room was covered by CCTV, the monitors of which were located in a wooden and glass construction within the visits room. This was staffed during domestic visits by a Prison Officer. **None of those we spoke to had received any training in the use of**

this equipment but had merely picked up the basics from their colleagues. This should be addressed.

4.04 Although clearly a positive initiative in the prevention of drugs entering the establishment there were a number of disadvantages. The fact that it was situated within the visits room and the operator could be observed by anyone present was not ideal. The operator had no telephone or means of communication with the other visits staff and any move to leave their area or attract the attention of the other staff was obvious to the prisoners and visitors within the room which could result in contraband being disposed of before there was the chance to retrieve it. **This situation should be improved.**

4.05 Prisoners and their visitors sat at normal level tables on plastic bucket type chairs. These were all fixed to the floor and the prisoner sat in a specific seat which was red. **Consideration should be given to replacing these with low level coffee tables and low chairs which would not only make the passing of contraband under the table more difficult but would also contribute to a more relaxed and welcoming environment.** There were three vending machines which provided hot and cold drinks and snacks.

4.06 There were no accessible toilets in the visits area for either prisoners or their visitors. Prisoners would have to be returned to their wings, providing there were staff available to escort them. Visitors had to go back to the visitors waiting room which was some distance outside the gate and would then have to go through the searching procedure again on their return. Because there were no baby changing facilities the same would apply to carers who needed to attend to children. This obviously took a significant amount of time. There were toilets located within the visits room, which included both a disabled toilet and an area suitable for attending to babies. However, these had not been in use for some time because of “security implications”. **Proper access to toilet facilities within visits should be provided for visitors.**

4.07 There was a children's crèche in the visits room which was staffed by three volunteers from the Mothers Union from the diocese of Bath and Wells on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The children's play area was clean and provided a stimulating environment for children with plenty of toys, books and activities supervised by enthusiastic volunteers. It was located on a gallery a little way away from where the visits were actually taking place and was separated from the main visits area by a castle shaped partition.

4.08 Visits was staffed by a minimum of four officers who were drawn from around the prison. There was no Senior Officer. **In addition we found it very difficult to pin point anyone who had overall responsibility for visits. This should be addressed.** These staff were supplemented by the OSGs on the gate who let the visitors in and the staff deployed to search visitors.

4.09 The visitors waiting room, outside the wall opposite the gate, was difficult to get to due to the system of pathways leading to it. It was extremely basic and very dirty with rubbish and cigarette butts on the floors. Although there were toilets available these were also filthy. The room was sparse with very little literature displayed to provide information to visitors and furnishing consisted of a slatted wooden bench along the walls. **Overall it was a very unwelcoming room which should be cleaned up and utilised to its best advantage.**

4.10 Visitors could arrive at any time before visits and collect a large wooden numbered tally which ensured their place in the queue to enter the visits room. They also had to complete a form which was checked against the visiting order and also served as a declaration that they were aware of the regulations about smuggling drugs into prison. They then went to the waiting room. We talked to a number of visitors whilst they were waiting. In general they had no complaints and said that they were treated well by the staff but they did say that entry into the visits room was often delayed and could take up to an hour after visits was supposed to begin. They were told to return to the gate for 1350 but often the process of letting visitors in did not commence until 1410. (On the day of the inspection

visitors began to enter the establishment at 1355, with the last one arriving in the visits room at 1435). As there was no shelter at the gate this could mean standing around for sometime, often in inclement weather. There was a small waiting room inside the gate but this was reserved for official visitors. **The facilities for prisoners' visitors should be improved.**

4.11 Visitors entered the prison a few at a time depending on the number tally they had. They were then searched. This took place in cramped conditions in a very small shabby portacabin. We felt the level of searching carried out, although done fairly sensitively, was inappropriate for a Category C establishment. All visitors, including children, had to remove their shoes and show the staff searching the soles of their feet, open their mouths and show beneath their tongues. We observed this done on a toddler. A visitor told us that on occasions he had to remove his baby's nappy and this was confirmed by staff. We were also concerned about the notice on display about how to strip search a baby. Searching was carried out by a male OSG and female "searching matron" who just attended the prison on visits days to search visitors. We were alarmed to discover this person was very heavily pregnant and was expecting her child at any moment. We would question the sensibility of this and whether a proper risk assessment had been carried out. **A review of the policy for pregnant staff should be undertaken.**

4.12 Prisoners were brought to the visits room after movement to work had finished and before the visitors arrived. We were pleased to note they were not brought over unless their visitors had actually reported to the gate. At the end of visits a percentage of prisoners were strip searched. This took place on a tatty prison sheet in the prisoners side of the closed visits area, which in effect was a thoroughfare. **There should be proper facilities for strip searching prisoners which afford a reasonable level of privacy.**

4.13 There was capacity for four closed visits, although we were told these were very rarely used. At the time of the inspection there were three prisoners on closed visits. It was normal practice for prisoners who had been caught receiving drugs through visits or the CCTV had picked up suspicious behaviour for that prisoner to be placed on closed visits

for the next nine visits, but usually only with that specific visitor. The closed visits booths were clean and well decorated and afforded a reasonable level of privacy. There was no list of those on closed visits kept in the visits room, although an otherwise well kept observation book contained one form indicating a prisoner was on closed visits. There was no record of the other two and staff on duty in visits did not know which prisoners were supposed to be on closed visits. **This should be addressed.**

4.14 Prisoners subject to child protection regulations were identified by a scrap of paper with three names on it tucked into the booked visits record, and also, along with those on closed visits by a T card system in the gate. These T cards were initiated for any prisoner who may have needed closed supervision on visits whether it be for security reasons or child protection issues. The gate staff would identify the relevant prisoners due for a visit that day and mark the visits booking sheet with a red dot. The idea was that visits staff were then aware. However, there was no indication as to what they should be aware of and when questioned about identifying prisoners on visits who may be subject to child protection measures the visits staff were unsure but felt confident they could identify Schedule One offenders from their own residential units. There was no mention of red dots on the booking sheet. **This system lacked sophistication and should be improved.**

4.15 Police and solicitors visits took place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. They were booked through the discipline office and took place in the main visiting room.

Throughcare

Overview

4.16 The Throughcare Department was led by a Governor 5, Head of Throughcare and Activities who was also the programme manager for the Extended Thinking Skills (ETS) programme. The department contained Probation Officers, an Executive Officer, administrative staff, Senior Officers and Officers detailed from residential wings. The

department had responsibility for a variety of tasks including sentence management, legal aid, labour allocation, Release on Temporary Licence, allocation to other establishments, Home Detention Curfew (HDC) and some offending behaviour courses. There was no committee or group that met to discuss policy or provision.

Sentence Management

4.17 The administration of sentence plans was very good. Staff kept track of when plans had to be reviewed and arranged the necessary papers and the sentence planning boards. Boards were regularly held and sentence plans were up to date. This was especially important since initial allocation to labour depended on these plans. The boards were chaired by a Governor grade, or by a Senior Officer and, although personal officers were often unable to attend, they were kept informed of the outcome of boards. Prisoners were offered a copy of their sentence plan. Staff were well motivated and conscientious. Sentence plans themselves were carefully and thoughtfully constructed. Objectives for prisoners were relevant but still prescribed in the form of courses. There were no plans that required anything of personal officers or tutors or were targets that could have been achieved on the wings or at places of work. We support the approach adopted at Shepton Mallet that requires the prisoner to take the initiative and apply for a course; it was an indication of good intention.

Probation

4.18 The three Probation Officers were incorporated into the Throughcare Department. Each had responsibility for one wing and one of them was the treatment manager on the ETS programme. A Throughcare Business Plan 1999/2000 had been drawn up with Somerset Probation Service and it was regularly reviewed by the Governor 5 Head of Throughcare and Activities.

4.19 Probation staff were still being used for welfare-type work and applications from prisoners to see them were being monitored to establish what proportion could have been handled elsewhere. Currently probation staff thought that around 40% were inappropriate.

One example was a complaint about ‘lumpy custard’. There was a feeling that residential staff tended to pass on to probation those applications which they either could not, or were not prepared to, deal with. However, some wing staff were more conscientious and handled many queries themselves. The responsibilities and roles of probation and wing staff seemed cloudy and were due to lack of clear procedures and guidance from senior managers. **They should ensure that residential staff operate as personal officers in the widest context and that probation staff are used for their special expertise.**

4.20 Monitoring of Schedule 1 offenders and matters surrounding Child Protection were undertaken by probation staff. There were currently 43 Schedule 1 offenders and 18 were on the Sex Offender Register. Probation also carried the usual risk assessments and reporting required for HDC and parole and they were present on sentence planning boards.

Offending Behaviour Work

4.21 A range of programmes and courses were being delivered by departments across the establishment. A module on drugs and alcohol awareness was undertaken by education. Victim Awareness, Anger Management and ETS were delivered by probation and uniform staff and we applaud the multi-disciplinary approach to throughcare.

4.22 Referral for courses was through sentence plans but could equally be self-referral or by any member of staff in the prison. ETS had been running since May 1998, four groups had resulted in 29 completions and a programme for vulnerable prisoners on C wing had begun during our inspection. There was a waiting list of 40 for ETS and it was expected that all those assessed as suitable would be able to complete the programme before release. In the past 12 months, there had been four groups (two on each of B and C wings) of five or six prisoners on Victim Awareness with a waiting list of ten. Anger Management had been delivered to two groups each with eight prisoners in the past 12 months and four were on its waiting list. The only accredited course was the ETS. All other programmes being delivered were not accredited.

4.23 C wing had around 35 sex offenders, of whom 15 (43%) were in denial. Some motivational work needed to be carried out. We were told that a 'Deniers' programme was to be piloted at HMP Whatton in Autumn 2000 and there could be an opportunity for Shepton Mallet to assist in the research. It could also be a vehicle for tackling their own 'denier' population. Prisoners who are 'in denial' have a corrosive influence on newcomers to the wing as well as on those already there. They can convince those, who would otherwise be willing to admit to their crime, that it was not their fault. They also feed upon the experiences of each other in order to protect themselves from motivation. It therefore makes the job of staff that much more difficult and these prisoners become lost opportunities for rehabilitation.

Resettlement

4.24 We could not readily establish who was responsible for resettlement. There were no courses or groups that prepared prisoners for release. About a year ago, there used to be a one day session for prisoners about to be released but this had been discontinued. Probation served the licence, checked on accommodation address and notified external probation. The onus was on the prisoner to contact probation well in advance if there was a problem about accommodation on release.

4.25 We analysed the details of prisoners due for release in the six months following our inspection. They showed that 51% had no fixed abode and 48% had been employed before incarceration. At Shepton Mallet, the use of home leave as part of the re-integration process was rare. Prisoners often asked us why they were refused home leave when a few weeks' later, they were released on HDC. Other than Reception who carried out the final procedures before discharge, no department or senior manager had responsibility for overall policy.

4.26 Other than C wing whose prisoners were likely to be at Shepton Mallet for about 18 months, most other prisoners would be there for four months. Whilst we may think that time spent in prison should be opportunity for introspection and evaluation, the nearer he

gets to release, the more anxious a prisoner is likely to be about what is facing him in practical terms; that is, adjustment and survival. It is not for us to judge what use a newly released prisoner may make of opportunities provided by the State, nor what help we think he may realistically get from support services in the community. It is incumbent upon the Prison Service to help him to prepare for the journey in such a way as to give him hope and a fighting chance of success if he is serious about improving himself as an individual and as a member of society.

Conclusions

4.27 We asked several staff and managers how they knew that the provision of throughcare at Shepton Mallet met the needs of the bulk of its prisoner population such that it was identified and delivered before discharge. No-one could tell us. No needs analysis had been carried out and we were unable to evaluate the basis on which offending behaviour and other work had been planned.

4.28 The staff of the Throughcare Department were highly motivated and the multi-disciplinary approach was a success. Sentence plans were in place and were current. Unlike many throughcare departments at other establishments, Shepton Mallet already started the sentence planning process at Reception. Timing of course-based objectives should be such that if they are delivered early on in the sentence, there are refresher or booster courses before discharge. Each prisoner should be assessed thoroughly as now but planning throughcare provision should recognise specific need, timing of delivery and realistic achievability in the time spent at Shepton Mallet. **Throughcare needed clear direction and evidence-based strategy and this should begin with a needs assessment linked to average length of time spent in the prison. A proper programme dealing with release issues was required.**

Drug Strategy

4.29 The prison was in the process of agreeing a new written drugs policy at the time of our visit. This was intended to cover areas recommended by the recent Standards Audit

and also to include new developments within the prison such as the Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare (CARAT) service and the Addiction Rehabilitation Centre (ARC).

4.30 Responsibility for delivering the policy rested with the Drug Strategy Forum that drew its membership from representatives of the relevant departments within the prison and was chaired by the Deputy Governor, in his role as Drug Strategy Co-ordinator. Attendance at recent meetings of the Forum had been poor and members felt that it was not currently an effective body. **The role of the Drug Strategy Forum should be reviewed and consideration should be given as to whether it would be more appropriate if the role of Drug Strategy Co-ordinator was carried out by another member of the Senior Management Team.**

4.31 The prison had taken firm steps to deter the smuggling of drugs into the establishment. This included the 'pat-down' searching of all visitors, the introduction of a new sophisticated CCTV system into the visits area and the effective use of intelligence.

4.32 The prison also had the use of an active drugs dog and was intending to acquire a passive dog to facilitate the screening of visitors. This would require the prison to ensure that the dog handler was freed up to work the dogs and was available during visiting time. Over recent months the active drugs dog has been rarely worked and its abilities were in danger of being compromised through lack of use. **Management should ensure that the officer who handles the drug dogs is detailed to make the most efficient use of their abilities and is given appropriate time to keep them properly trained.**

4.33 The prison has consistently achieved its MDT target of 10% for random tests as well as carrying out targeted testing. Testing was carried out in a discrete suite and those prisoners we spoke to were satisfied with the way they were treated. The holding cell for those waiting to be tested was spartan and there was no relevant reading materials made available, particularly as to what help was available within the prison. **Written information**

on drugs and related issues should be made available within the drug-testing suite and in particular there should be diversionary reading materials within the holding cell.

4.34 We were given figures for 1999, which appeared to show that there had been a reduction in positive tests over the last quarter of the year, although the prison did not routinely interrogate MDT results for trends. In particular there did not appear to be a systematic analysis of the results of random drug testing which could then inform strategic policy.

4.35 The Drug Strategy Forum should agree which statistics are relevant to their planning and ensure that data and information are presented in a format which would allow them to respond in the most effective manner.

4.36 A significant percentage of positive MDT results were for tests that were consistent with taking medication. It appeared that although these were as result of drugs that were legitimately prescribed within the prison, they were still being counted as illegal acquisition of drugs. This obviously had the result of exaggerating the incidence of drug use within the prison and in particular the use of opiate type drugs. **The Prison Service should ensure that reporting systems associated with drug testing allow for drugs illegally used and those which have been legitimately prescribed.**

4.37 The Education Department within the prison was delivering a Drug and Alcohol Awareness Course, which was being received positively by both prisoners and staff. It was intended that they should provide a fundamental element of the programme on the Addiction Rehabilitation Centre (ARC) and had received Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) funding for this purpose. However, Education staff were still unclear as to the input required from them and was anxious that this was resolved rapidly to allow them to plan their curriculum for the forthcoming year. **The Drug Strategy Group should confirm the**

required contribution and timetable from the Education Department to ARC, as soon as possible, to allow them to plan their programme for the coming year.

4.38 The prison had been allocated a staff member from the West Wiltshire Medical Health Trust to undertake CARAT work with the prisoners. Although having been in employment for less than two months he was already building up a substantial caseload and was having difficulties dealing with the number of applications to see him.

4.39 We were impressed by the progress and impact made by the post-holder within a relatively short length of time and in particular we felt that his contribution to the throughcare element was invaluable. The post had been originally seen by the Area Drugs Co-ordinator as primarily providing a three-day week service, with the other two days being used as necessary as a replacement for staff in other prisons within the cluster for holidays or sick leave. There were no arrangements for staff in the cluster to provide the same facility to Shepton Mallet. **Given the uptake of the CARAT service within Shepton Mallet and the anticipated workload, the Area Drug Co-ordinator should review the original strategy and determine whether the post at the prison should be made full time.**

4.40 The prison's major development for those with a significant drug misuse problem was its Addiction Rehabilitation Centre (ARC). This was a discrete 22-bed unit, which was intended to provide an intensive and systematic programme aimed at those prisoners with a history of chaotic and problematic drug use. Based on a twelve-step model, the programme was intended to encourage prisoners to acknowledge the problems which drug use caused them, their families and wider society, and to accept support and help to remain drug free.

4.41 The prison had received CSR monies, both for capital and revenue costs, to establish ARC, which was in the latter stages of development during our visit. We were impressed by the work which had been done to refurbish the old hospital wing to provide accommodation for the unit. A combination of double and single cells as well as meeting and counselling rooms afforded a discrete and attractive unit which was flexible enough for

the potential needs of a developing therapeutic service. *The development of a twelve-step programme which was prepared to take prisoners both from Shepton Mallet itself and the wider area was to be welcomed.* **Consideration should be given to the exact role it will play within treatment services and to how it will fit into a progressive treatment rehabilitation regime within the area.**

4.42 Staff had been recruited to the ARC unit through an internal application and interview process although the programme manager had been recruited externally through a contract with the local health trust. At the time of the visit assessment was being made to see if sufficiently trained staff had been provided. **The drug rehabilitation programme should not commence until senior management are satisfied there are enough staff trained to provide a therapeutic intervention.**

4.43 The Drug Strategy Group needed to take more responsibility in the developmental process and in particular to ensure the proposed twelve-step programme was delivered. **The Drug Strategy Group should ensure this programme meets the requirements of this type of therapeutic model and is fully evaluated. An action plan should be developed between the Area CARAT Co-ordinator and the Programme Manager to ensure that the programme delivered would allow it to meet accreditation criteria in the future.**

4.44 Integral to the development of the ARC the prison had also decided to declare both A wing and the top landing of C wing as Voluntary Testing Accommodation. To this end literature and information had been disseminated throughout the prison. While voluntary testing had not commenced at the time of our visit prisoners had already applied to either remain or to move onto the Voluntary Testing Accommodation. Likewise all staff working in these areas were volunteers who had been internally recruited, specifically to support the concept of voluntary testing. The enthusiasm of both staff and prisoners for areas which provided support for prisoners who wished to remain drug free was encouraging. **Consideration should be given to providing both support and relapse prevention**

groups on these wings, as well as other incentives to confirm this approach as a positive choice for prisoners.

4.45 The prison's Health Care Department had been totally reorganised within recent months and the new staff recognised that drug misuse and associated issues were one of the most significant health issues for which they had to provide interventions. They were keen to both develop their role in primary assessment and to provide input as part of the CARAT process and to the ARC programme. In particular there was a need for them to develop a Hepatitis C strategy both in identification and support of those who were positive for the virus as well as providing education and prevention services to the wider drug using community within the prison. **The Health Care Department should be supported in developing and providing a comprehensive health promotion service to drug users and in particular the delivery of an effective strategy on Hepatitis C.**

4.46 Shepton Mallet was in the process of developing drug services which would provide significant interventions for its population as well as other prisons in the Area. This had been compromised by the departure of their specialist drugs worker to an Area post at a time when his continued involvement in the prison was most needed. This in turn had resulted in a delay in the implementation of its strategy which been funded through CSR monies. These issues had recently been recognised by the prison and senior management was taking steps to ensure that all initiatives were given the support needed to put them into action. **We would support the development of Shepton Mallet as a specialist provider of drug rehabilitation services in the Area and would recommend that external research should continue to be funded by the Area to evaluate the efficacy of its interventions.**

CHAPTER FIVE

MANAGEMENT

The Estate

5.01 The estate had been maintained in a very serviceable condition both inside and out. Some routine maintenance tasks were seen to be needing attention, there were some large repairs which clearly will need attention in the near future and some updating to meet current standards were needed; all exactly as would be expected of an economically operated maintenance programme.

Plenum heating system

5.02 The prison was still heated and ventilated by the original plenum system built into the fabric. The ductwork had been changed bit by bit over time, was impossible to regulate and did not heat the buildings as required. It was not possible to clean the ducts effectively to comply with current requirements and they provided an excellent path for the spread of smoke and fire throughout the building. **The plenum system should be replaced by wet systems and the ductwork blanked off.**

Wing refurbishment

5.03 We saw that B wing was approaching the time when a considerable amount of work would be needed. The wing was fitted with the old pattern of wooden cell door, cleaning and redecoration were needed, and the landing rails were not as effective as they could have been and the roof covering was old and showing signs of leakage. C and A wings were similar but not so near to needing major refurbishment as repairs and modifications had been carried out over time. Given that the plenum system needed replacing, **a progressive programme of refurbishment should also be put in hand.**

Visits

5.04 We saw the WC provision for visitors in the Visits Room had been taken out of use for security reasons, the visitors' searching took place in an unsuitable portacabin, there was no sensible provision for processing disabled visitors and there was no shelter for staff or visitors while paperwork was being processed. All these unsatisfactory arrangements could be avoided by the addition of a gatelodge to the new gate which had been cut into the wall some two years previously. **A new gatehouse with adequate visitors accommodation should be added to the gate recently cut into the wall.**

5.05 The Visitors' Waiting Room outside the gate was very austere, even forbidding. It was provided with only two WCs. There was damp in the plaster under the windows caused by the lack of fall on the outside sills, which were almost level. **New sills with adequate fall should be fitted.**

Works Department

5.06 About £70,000 had been allocated for maintenance for the current year. If the level was maintained it would almost certainly result in the depreciation of the assets at Shepton Mallet. **Maintenance funding should be re-assessed to a level, which will not result in running down the condition of the estate.**

5.07 Work within the prison was carried out by the Works Department in the normal way. It was also carried out in some degree by a DIY team comprising an Instructor with a group of inmates and separate inmate painting parties nominally managed by wing staff but in practice completely unsupervised. It was difficult to determine who was responsible for either the DIY team or the inmate painters; there was clearly no co-ordination of their activities with that of the Works Department.

5.08 More seriously, we found that the inmates had been working at high level perched precariously on the top landing of B block without any access or safety equipment. This

was a flagrant breach of Health and Safety regulations, as well as common sense. The Governor discontinued the two working parties when we brought our concerns to his attention. **All maintenance work should be carried out under the direction of the Works Department.**

5.09 During the week of the Inspection, one tradesman's time was wholly lost to Works escort duties. A significant amount of new work as opposed to maintenance had been done. Whilst we feel it is important tradesman undertake a modicum of new work to preserve their skills, the level of staffing made it impossible. **The level of tradesman staffing in the Works Department should be reviewed and escorts made available to avoid using skilled time on jobs where unskilled time is adequate.**

5.10 The list of Small Repairs was surprisingly long. We suspect that many had been done but not removed from the list. **Outstanding Small Repairs should be progressed more effectively.**

5.11 The management of the Works Department was not fully integrated into the policy work of the Senior Management Team (SMT). **The Works Department should be drawn fully into the prison management structure. *We were pleased to see the speed with which the Works Department dealt with a number of minor defects pointed out during the Inspection.***

Boiler house, distribution mains and heating

5.12 The boiler house plant and heating mains were almost thirty years old. As this is a good life for such equipment we were not surprised to hear that failures were becoming more frequent. There were a disproportionate number of portable and fixed heating items of electrical equipment throughout the prison. Such equipment must be increasing electricity costs. Decentralised gas boilers would reduce utility charges and free a significant area occupied by the boiler house. **The heating in the prison should be surveyed, electric heating replaced and decentralised gas plant installed.**

Flat roofs

5.13 There were a number of leaking flat roofs to be seen. As these were of a simple geometric plan they could easily be covered over. **Lightweight pitched roofs should be fixed over the flat roofs to provide a permanent solution.**

Routine maintenance

5.14 There were a number of routine maintenance items requiring attention. They included:

1. Spalling concrete in the large workshop block
2. Leaking gymnasium roof
3. Defective exterior paintwork
4. Lack of heaters in the switchroom
5. Obsolete schedules of equipment for Statutory Inspection

5.15 All were recognised by the Works Department, action had been started on some, but all required pushing ahead.

Health and Safety

5.16 Much work had obviously been done on Health and Safety matters in the prison, but it was not finished, co-ordinated or managed at the workplace. A newly promoted Governor grade, inexperienced in this area, had been appointed only a few days before the Inspection to chair the Health and Safety Committee and oversee the subject. Management had not provided all the relevant records. Considerable time and effort was needed to pull Health and Safety together to make an acceptable whole. **This should be addressed.**

Policy and Statement of Arrangements

5.17 There was a Policy/Statement of Arrangements which should be either amended or rewritten and updated.

Training records

5.18 The use of Inmate Training Records F2055C was haphazard; some departments used them, others did not. **The prison did not operate the system as intended either internally or for prisoners transferring to other establishments. This should be addressed.**

COSHH

5.19 We found that COSHH sheets were available in some workplaces but not in others. **They should be in all relevant areas.**

Kitchen cold room alarm

5.20 A new cold room had been fitted in the kitchen shortly before the Inspection. **The “locked in” alarm was barely audible and there was no arrangement for ensuring that it was tested regularly by kitchen staff.**

Fire Report

5.21 There had been a very comprehensive Fire Precaution survey some twelve months before the Inspection and a detailed report published. It reflected a long period of failure to keep up to date with changing legislation. The many items, which required capital expenditure, had been aggregated by Construction Services who were preparing documents in order to let a substantial contract. We endorse this necessary action. **We noted that the Fire Inspectorate has given Statutory Notice that the work should be completed by October 2000. This date should be met.**

Fire Precautions

5.22 We were unable to discuss fire precautions or to see the records required by statute as the single Fire Officer was not available at any time during the Inspection, and there was no deputy or assistant. Examination of fire precautions within the prison clearly showed that there had been a prolonged period of profound neglect. It was doubtful whether the prison

complied with a single regulation. A very comprehensive Fire Survey and Report and described all the shortcomings some twelve months before the Inspection. Construction Services were rectifying the physical shortcomings but the prison had taken no action to rectify management failure. Prolonged and vigorous action was needed to put the whole area of fire precautions to rights.

Fire Officer cover

5.23 There was only one Fire Officer without any deputy or assistant. As the Fire Officer was on shift work there were considerable periods when the prison was without Fire Officer cover or access to his records. **There should be Assistant Fire Officers to ensure continuity of cover.**

Staff training

5.24 We were unable to find the records of staff training which regulations require to be kept. All staff should have at least Fire Awareness training annually.

SBDA

5.25 SBDA boxes were fitted in some parts of the prison but not all. Enquiries of prison staff led us to believe that they were, quite correctly, empty because no training had been completed. **Adequate numbers of staff should be trained in the use of SDBA.**

Evacuation drills

5.26 No records were available. Very few staff could recall exercises being held and we were led to believe that evacuation drills were not being carried out as required by regulations. **Evacuation exercises should be held in all departments annually.**

Fire escape routes

5.27 Many fire routes were not signed at all, while others had obsolete signs. The routes were compromised by inadequate building construction and the battery maintained lighting

cover was not comprehensive. **Fire escape routes should be surveyed and made adequate in all respects.**

Fire dampers

5.28 We saw cases where galvanised steel ventilation trunking penetrated fire stop walls but were not fitted with fire dampers. **A fire damper and access door should be fitted in all ventilation ducts where they pass through fire stop walls.**

Finance and Resources

5.29 The table below gives the year expenditure and savings required

Year	Expenditure	Savings Required
1997/98	£3,938,442	£180,231
1998/99	£4,205,946	£77,800
1999/00	£4,323,883	£54,030
2000/01	Forecast £3,948,950	£66,850
2001/02	£3,896,410	£54,296

5.30 The savings required for this Financial Year would be achieved without any reduction of services to prisoners. This indicated genuine efficiency savings, although cuts to services had been put in place in earlier years. Savings required for the next Financial Year would be difficult to achieve. The level of staffing within the prison was tight and management was concerned that to achieve the percentage of savings might mean a reduction of services to prisoners. Given the description of regimes and shortfall of requirements within this report, then **services to prisoners should not be diminished.** Since the introduction of savings a few years ago, the establishment had reduced its staffing by 29½ %. Some of this was offset by an increase in operational service grades.

5.31 Headquarter's funding for specific targets (CSR funding) fell into two areas:

Education

- £15,000 for capital expenditure for changing classrooms. £106,170 for an increase in class work mainly based upon social skills and basic education.

Drugs

- the creation of the rehabilitation unit for drug abstinence programmes required £140,000. £90,480 had been given for the running cost of this new unit. £10,000 had been given to increase security measures.

Courses

- No funding had been given to increase accredited courses.

Strategy

5.32 The mission statement agreed for Shepton Mallet was “HMP Shepton Mallet aims to be a centre of excellence by providing the best range of inmate programmes in the Category C estate”. It was clear from this, that the management of Shepton Mallet wished to progress to a high standard of regime. However, this mission statement failed to take into account some aspects of the prison’s work and it was also difficult to judge if managers were providing the best range of programmes and how these would compare with others in the Category C estate. A mission statement should concentrate on what the effect of imprisonment should be on prisoners.

5.33 The question has to be asked, “what do the staff at Shepton Mallet want to be the result for prisoners having lived in their establishment?”. This question becomes very important when examining the life of prisoners and the regime they had.

5.34 This report conveys the safe status of prisoners, the good staff prisoner relationships and the high standard achieve by specialists. But all this does not necessarily mean that the prisoner is having his criminogenic problems properly addressed. Without a proper

induction programme, or preparation for release, many prisoners can freewheel through their time in the establishment.

5.35 It is the responsibility of management to ensure that any mission statement reflects what they wish to achieve. The decision to introduce a significant emphasis on drugs and drug programmes was good; this was being well supported by the Area Manager and finance had been set up to ensure that a proper abstinence course was provided and drug free areas were established.

5.36 During this financial year, the Governor had identified other targets:

- special needs education for the vulnerable prisoner unit. Much of this was now being introduced
- delivery of basic and key skills. The provision of CSR money had enabled this to take place
- development of partnership with probation to deliver CARATS. Much of this was being centred on contracts drawn up and organised through area management
- assessment and training of prisoners on B wing. This development was intended to ensure that all B wing prisoners had work and access to education, where emphasis was to be upon key skills, life skills and NVQ work. It was also intended there should be an expansion of community work and use of PE staff. Some of this was delivered but its co-ordination and expansion had yet to be finalised.

5.37 It is essential that the establishment creates a proper full induction programme; this should be linked to the development of pre release arrangements. There was no attempt to look at the issues around accommodation on discharge, debt management, jobs, benefit and relationships for each prisoner. **All these needed to be tackled.** Every prisoner requires individual attention, especially with some only staying for a few weeks in the prison.

5.38 Alongside this there was a need to develop the personal officer scheme. Officers did have the time to reach out to prisoners. They should introduce themselves to the new

prisoners and constantly check on their well being and whether identified issues were being addressed by them. This may require further training. It will require training for senior officers who have to manage these schemes.

5.39 Overall, Shepton Mallet was in a position to concentrate its efforts on resettlement and tackling offending behaviour. Such activities are more effective in a stable, safe and respectful environment and in many ways Shepton Mallet provided this. This should now be given a high priority.

What Staff Said

During our inspections we listen to the views of many prisoners, staff and representatives from staff associations, individually and in groups. We believe this to be important and record what was said because they reflect the feelings of people living and working in the establishment. Where appropriate, we record our own findings alongside these comments, particularly those made by prisoners. However, it should not be assumed that where there are no such bracketed findings, views expressed by prisoners, staff and staff associations in the following paragraphs necessarily accord with our own judgements, these are to be found in the main body of the report.

5.40 We spoke to a group of 11 managers comprising residential staff, administration, works, education, catering and drugs. They had been at Shepton Mallet between two days and ten years. They told us:

- staff at Shepton Mallet were very friendly, departments were integrated and there was a good rapport. All departments were more accessible to one another
- they did not feel involved in decision making and were often not consulted but told what would happen
- there was no clear strategy on how the prison should improve and no indication as to what its role should be

- the Governor's post seemed a stepping stone to elsewhere
- suggestions were made but nothing happens. One said if they had any problems, they went to the Area Manager
- some had recently attended a leadership training workshop. On the last day, the Governor attended for group feedback but did not take criticisms well
- staff/prisoner relationships were good. Adjudications were usually for MDT and the IEP, especially TV as an incentive, seemed to be working
- the work done by the gym staff was excellent.

What We Were Told; Non-Managers

5.41 We spoke to a group of twelve members of staff who had been working at Shepton Mallet between three months and twenty two years. They were deployed in various departments around the prison including residential units, health care, throughcare, administration, probation, works, personnel and security. They told us:

- staff/ prisoner relationships were excellent and this was reflected by the low levels of assaults, complaints and adjudications
- there were only two or three adjudications each week and only three hundred all of last year. This was because the IEP scheme worked well. MDT results were the only thing which kept the level of adjudications up
- there was a drug problem at Shepton Mallet but the establishment was doing its best to combat it. Many prisoners were bullied into bringing drugs in
- the anti-bullying scheme worked when it was used and was a good deterrent
- about one prisoner every three months applied for segregation for their own protection. (RULE 45)
- there were minimal levels of self harm, again one case every three months. Listeners were used around the clock
- many prisoners who had mental problems were dumped on them they were self harmers or poor copers, who should not have been there but the staff coped with it

- it was a lot better at Shepton Mallet now than in the past. There were less prisoners and because the population had reduced so had the problems, for example prisoners were more likely to get to use the phone. Staff also had more time for them and could provide them with a better service. This in turn meant prisoners provided staff with more information and they could keep on top of any problems
- staff sickness had dramatically reduced due to the change in management
- the job of Shepton Mallet was about retraining prisoners and providing them with more work. The education provided was excellent and was the main employer in the prison. There was a problem if prisoners did not want to attend education and were not suited to work which had minimal supervision, for example the Works Department because there was little else to offer them. There was not enough work for all
- Education had a “help mate” scheme in which prisoners helped other prisoners to learn. They also did a “Firmstart” scheme and Healthy Living courses
- the majority of prisoners were released on discharge at the end of their sentence. Very few were made Category D
- there were not many offending behaviour courses running. This was mainly due to staffing, funding and the size of the establishment
- the changes in the last few years had been enormous. There was a new visits room and the gate had been relocated. The staff were very proud of what they did with the resources they had got
- they took a lot of sex offender deniers on the vulnerable prisoners wing (C wing). Attempts were made to get them to try to admit their offending behaviour but there was no deniers course running. They were encouraged however to work at other things, for example work qualifications. Prisoners asked to come to the VPU at Shepton Mallet because they assumed their offending will not be challenged
- staff were never told the exact figure which needed to be saved in the prison’s budget (although they were remarkably accurate when they hazarded a guess). They felt frustrated because they did not know how further cuts could be made,

although they had heard rumours that the PO level might be lost and other staff feared for their individual posts. They felt it was unfair because other prisons did not have to make the same cuts

- industrial relations were all right, particularly within the Administration Department. The Governor dealt with the POA individually and they did not attend the Whitley meeting so they were seen as receiving special treatment
- staff did not think there were enough staff, but managers did. The new rehabilitation unit was given as an example
- the Health Care Department felt very supported by the officers
- senior managers very rarely visited any of the areas represented, with the exception of throughcare.

Board of Visitors

5.42 We spoke to the Chair of the Board of Visitors who told us:

- there had been a lot of change and improvement in accommodation in the last two years
- staff were caring. The good atmosphere between them and prisoners created an environment of decency, courtesy and humanity
- there was some tension between officer grades and managers but working relationships were generally good
- the Governor kept the Board well informed. He was aware that his absences attending college had an adverse impact and he was not visible around the prison. The deputy Governor was regarded as friendly, very efficient and approachable
- the personal officer scheme worked well and prisoners often said that their personal officers had been helpful
- the BOV did not receive many formal applications and queries tended to be about money and property not being transferred on from other establishments
- the formal induction programme for prisoners had failed because staff were regularly detailed away for other duties

- the VP unit (C wing) was successful since prisoners there felt safe and staff enjoyed working on the wing. But there were no sex offender programmes or other offending behaviour work
- Shepton Mallet was a nice prison, the BOV felt safe, were treated with respect and they felt useful
- they were surprised that the prison had failed the general audit and did not know why
- they regarded the new drug rehabilitation unit as a means of raising the profile of the prison
- budget cuts seemed so unfair
- the Board had raised with the Governor, the continued closure of the toilet in the visits room but it still remained shut.

CHAPTER SIX

RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICE

Other Recommendations

To The Director General

Health Care

- 6.01 Contracts should be based on needs assessment and monitoring should involve surveillance of standards as well as simply monitoring attendance rates. (2.68)

Drug Strategy

- 6.02 The Prison Service should ensure that reporting systems associated with drug testing allow for drugs illegally used and those which have been legitimately prescribed. (4.36)

Estate

- 6.03 The plenum system should be replaced by wet systems and the ductwork blanked off. (5.02)
- 6.04 A new gatehouse with adequate visitors accommodation should be added to the gate recently cut into the wall. (5.04)
- 6.05 Lightweight pitched roofs should be fixed over the flat roofs to provide a permanent solution. (5.13)

Fire

- 6.06 The deficiencies highlighted in the Fire Inspectorate report should be completed by October 2000. (5.21)

To The Governor

Reception

- 6.07 Reading material, a radio or a television should be provided to occupy prisoners in reception. (1.03)
- 6.08 Information about the Listeners, Samaritans and the Anti-bullying strategy should be displayed on the notice boards. (1.04)
- 6.09 A telephone should be installed in reception for prisoners to use while they are waiting to be processed. (1.08)
- 6.10 Procedures to explore prisoners' immediate needs in reception should be improved. (1.10)
- 6.11 A system to ensure vital information is passed from reception to the wings should be put in place. (1.10)

Induction

- 6.12 First night arrangements should be improved. (1.16)
- 6.13 A proper, structured induction programme should be devised and implemented. (1.17)
- 6.14 The time spent by prisoners locked in their cells while waiting for or participating in the induction programme should be kept to a minimum. (1.18)

- 6.15 Access to the induction programme should be improved. (1.19)
- 6.16 The initial assessment and induction record should be expanded and further developed. (1.20)
- 6.17 An induction booklet should be devised and introduced. (1.20)

Self Harm

- 6.18 Residential staff should attend meetings of the Suicide Awareness committee. (1.23)
- 6.19 The Samaritans should be informed about all suicide and self harm incidents. (1.26)
- 6.20 Arrangements should be put in place to notify relatives in the event of a death or serious injury in custody. (1.28)
- 6.21 Staff training should be expedited. (1.29)
- 6.22 Liaison officers should be appointed on all residential units. (1.29)

Anti-Bullying

- 6.23 Staff awareness training should be started. (1.32)

Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme

- 6.24 The compact should be reviewed. (1.36)
- 6.25 The rules for early consideration for enhanced status should be explained to all prisoners arriving at Shepton Mallet. (1.37)

6.26 The visits entitlement for prisoners on basic should not be restricted to the legal minimum. (1.39)

6.27 The criteria for granting the privilege of a television should be reviewed. (1.40)

6.28 Entries in prisoners' wing records should be improved. (1.41)

Good Order

6.29 The monitoring of Control and Restraint techniques should be improved. (1.44)

Security

6.30 Administrative support should be provided for the Security Department. (1.45)

6.31 The siting and number of security gates should be reduced. (1.46)

Segregation Unit

6.32 The cell identified for holding violent prisoners overnight should be taken out of use. (1.48)

6.33 Privacy screens should be fitted. (1.51)

6.34 Access to daylight and fresh air should be improved. (1.52)

B Wing

6.35 The screening arrangements should be improved. (2.12)

6.36 The policy on the display of offensive material should be enforced. (2.13)

6.37 All prisoners should be supplied with enough clothing to allow a daily change of underwear. (2.17)

6.38 The arrangements for the collection of prisoners' clothing on B wing should be reviewed. (2.18)

6.39 The showers on B wing should be refurbished. (2.20)

6.40 Access to the telephones on B wing should be improved. (2.21)

6.41 The personal officer scheme should be reviewed. (2.23)

6.42 The supervision of the cleaning party should be improved. (2.25)

C Wing

6.43 The proposal to introduce a drug free landing on C wing should be reviewed.
(2.30)

6.44 A range of courses should be considered for prisoners on C wing. (2.31)

6.45 A detailed needs analysis of these prisoners should be done and every attempt made to address these needs. (2.31)

6.46 A pre-release course should be provided. (2.32)

6.47 Privacy hoods should be fitted to the telephones. (2.41)

6.48 A needs analysis should be carried out leading to a realistic regime, activities and how to deal with offending behaviour programmes. (2.42)

6.49 A policy of integration should be considered. (2.43)

Spiritual Activities

- 6.50 Staff on the wing should ensure that prisoners know the times of services and facilitate their access. (2.50)
- 6.51 Prisoners should arrive at the services on time. (2.50)
- 6.52 A closer working relationship should be developed between staff and the Chaplaincy team. (2.51)

Prison Shop

- 6.53 Systems should be put in place to cater for new receptions so that they do not have to wait an excessively long time to purchase goods from the canteen. (2.55)
- 6.54 The decision to restrict the amount of orange juice sold should be reviewed. (2.56)

Catering

- 6.55 Plans to introduce certificated training in the kitchen should be pursued. (2.58)
- 6.56 The damaged floor should be repaired. (2.60)
- 6.57 All staff should be trained in health and hygiene issues. (2.64)
- 6.58 The supervision of the hotplates should be improved. (2.64)

Health Care

- 6.59 The Governor should enter early discussions with the Chief Executive of the local health authority with a view to developing an improved system for contracting and monitoring health care services. (2.68)

Pharmacy

- 6.60 Lockable cupboards should be installed for the storage of medicines. (2.71)
- 6.61 A maximum/minimum thermometer should be obtained and a daily written record maintained of the refrigerator temperatures. (2.73)
- 6.62 The arrangements for safeguarding prescribed medicines should be improved. (2.77)
- 6.63 All prescriptions should be dated by the doctor. (2.78)
- 6.64 The use of Henley Bags should be phased out in favour of conventional containers or Venalink. (2.79)
- 6.65 A logbook should be maintained and signed by all authorised persons requesting use of the pharmacy key out of hours. (2.81)
- 6.66 A written procedure with regard to out of hours provision should be drawn up. (2.81)
- 6.67 An emergency supply cabinet should be provided. (2.82)
- 6.68 Stock for use in the cabinet should be selected by consultation with the pharmacist at HMP Bristol. (2.82)
- 6.69 A written procedure should be drawn up for use of the emergency cabinet. (2.82)
- 6.70 There should be written evidence available for checks of the resuscitation kit. (2.83)

- 6.71 The pharmacist from HMP Bristol should try to visit the prison at monthly intervals, to advise and generally oversee the provision of the pharmacy service. (2.85)

Dental Services

- 6.72 The provision of seamless, vinyl, flooring would meet current standards and a regime of thorough, regular, cleaning should be agreed and monitored. (2.87)
- 6.73 A waiting room during dental sessions or seating in the corridor should be provided. (2.88)
- 6.74 An emergency drug kit together with suitable airways should be provided. (2.89)
- 6.75 A telephone and a more appropriately placed emergency call button should be provided. (2.90)
- 6.76 Medical histories should be recorded and updated on dental record cards. (2.91)
- 6.77 Suitable procedures should be drawn up for the provision of 'out of hours' emergency dental treatment. (2.92)
- 6.78 A suitable storage container for endodontic instruments together with a mercury spillage kit should be provided. (2.93)

Employment

- 6.79 The arrangements for moving prisoners to work and activities should be reviewed. (3.03)
- 6.80 Full use should be made of the employment activities offered. (3.03)

- 6.81 Parties should be filled to their maximum capacity thus limiting the number of prisoners locked in their cells during the day. (3.03)
- 6.82 Work opportunities should be expanded. (3.04)
- 6.83 Efforts to expand existing contracts should be encouraged. (3.06)
- 6.84 A more realistic working environment should be created in the workshops. (3.05 & 3.07)
- 6.85 The operations of the DIY party should be based on skills acquired through formalised training. (3.08)
- 6.86 The provision of certificated training should be expanded. (3.09)

Education

- 6.87 The induction process on C wing should be improved. (3.12)
- 6.88 The induction process should be reviewed. (3.13)
- 6.89 The provision of accredited training should be expanded and supported by appropriate key skills training. (3.18)
- 6.90 The introduction of evening and weekend classes should be considered. (3.22)
- 6.91 The imbalance in the provision of education between the different wings should be addressed. (3.22)
- 6.92 More provision should be made to allow inmates to progress to higher levels of achievement. (3.24)

- 6.93 The Contractor and the Prison Education Department should work together to minimise any sense of isolation felt by staff and provide them with broader and extended professional training opportunities. (3.25)
- 6.94 Careers advice and literature should be improved. (3.26)
- 6.95 The provision of pre-release courses, job clubs and other vocational guidance should be introduced. (3.28)
- 6.96 The display of prisoners' work should be improved. (3.29)
- 6.97 Part-time administrative support should be provided to cover absences. (3.33)

Library

- 6.98 The library should be open more frequently, and access should be equally good for inmates on all wings. (3.36)
- 6.99 The library should be expanded and developed. (3.37)

Physical Education

- 6.100 The exercise yard should be resurfaced. (3.38)
- 6.101 Ventilation to the ground floor exercise areas should be improved. (3.39)
- 6.102 Plans to repair and improve the roof should be expedited. (3.41)
- 6.103 Funding should be provided for an extra PEI. (3.45)

- 6.104 Sports and games staff should be deployed to ensure the full PE programme is provided for prisoners. (3.45)
- 6.105 The number of prisoners receiving accredited training should be increased. (3.46)
- 6.106 First Aid refresher training for the PEIs should be carried out. (3.47)
- 6.107 PE staff should be encouraged to take an active part in the anti-bullying strategy. (3.48)

Visits

- 6.108 Posters and other relevant information should be displayed on the walls of the visits room. (4.02)
- 6.109 Staff should be trained in the use of the CCTV. (4.03)
- 6.110 Communications between the CCTV operator and visits staff should be improved. (4.04)
- 6.111 The seating arrangements in the visits room should be improved. (4.05)
- 6.112 Proper access to toilet facilities within visits should be provided for visitors. (4.06)
- 6.113 Management responsibility for visits should be clearly defined. (4.08)
- 6.114 The visitors' waiting room should be cleaned and made more welcoming. (4.09)
- 6.115 The facilities for prisoners' visitors should be improved. (4.10)

- 6.116 A review of the policy for pregnant staff should be undertaken. (4.11)
- 6.117 There should be proper facilities for strip searching prisoners which afford a reasonable level of privacy. (4.12)
- 6.118 Management of the closed visits system should be improved. (4.13)
- 6.119 The system for identifying children potentially at risk on visits should be improved. (4.14)

Probation

- 6.120 The roles of probation staff should be clarified and restricted to that which requires their special expertise. (4.19)

Throughcare

- 6.121 The strategy for throughcare should be reviewed and based on a needs assessment of the population particularly those dealing with release issues. (4.28)

Drug Strategy

- 6.122 The role of the Drug Strategy Forum should be reviewed. (4.30)
- 6.123 The deployment of the drug dog handler should be reviewed. (4.32)
- 6.124 Written information on drugs and related issues should be made available within the drug-testing suite. (4.33)
- 6.125 The Drug Strategy Forum should agree which statistics are relevant to their planning and ensure that data and information are presented in a format which would allow them to respond in the most effective manner. (4.35)

- 6.126 The Drug Strategy Group should confirm the required contribution and timetable from the Education Department to ARC. (4.37)
- 6.127 The Area Drug Co-ordinator should review the original drug strategy. (4.39)
- 6.128 The future role of the Addiction Rehabilitation Centre should be considered. (4.41)
- 6.129 The drug rehabilitation programme should not commence until senior management are satisfied there are enough staff trained to provide a therapeutic intervention. (4.42)
- 6.130 The Drug Strategy Group should ensure the chosen programme meets the requirements of this type of therapeutic model. (4.43)
- 6.131 Steps should be taken to ensure the programme delivered meets accreditation criteria. (4.43)
- 6.132 Support and relapse prevention groups should be provided. (4.44)
- 6.133 The Health Care Department should be supported in developing and providing a comprehensive health promotion service to drug users and in particular the delivery of an effective strategy on Hepatitis C. (4.45)
- 6.134 The development of Shepton Mallet as a specialist provider of drug rehabilitation services in the Area should be supported. (4.46)

Estate

- 6.135 A progressive programme of refurbishment should be put in hand. (5.03)

- 6.136 The use of inmate training records should be reviewed. (5.18)
- 6.137 New sills with adequate fall should be fitted. (5.05)
- 6.138 Maintenance funding should be re-assessed to a level, which will not result in running down the condition of the estate. (5.06)
- 6.139 All maintenance work should be carried out under the direction of the Works Department. (5.08)
- 6.140 The level of tradesman staffing in the Works Department should be reviewed and escorts made available to avoid using skilled time on jobs where unskilled time is adequate. (5.09)
- 6.141 Outstanding Small Repairs should be progressed more effectively. (5.10)
- 6.142 The Works Department should be drawn fully into the prison management structure. (5.11)
- 6.143 The heating in the prison should be surveyed, electric heating replaced and decentralised gas plant installed. (5.12)
- 6.144 The management of Health and Safety matters should be improved. (5.16)
- 6.145 The use of prisoners' training records should be improved. (5.18)
- 6.146 COSHH sheets should be available in all workplaces. (5.19)
- 6.147 The alarm should be made more audible and arrangements made for regular testing by kitchen staff. (5.20)

Fire

- 6.148 There should be Assistant Fire Officers to ensure continuity of cover. (5.23)
- 6.149 Adequate numbers of staff should be trained in the use of SDBA. (5.25)
- 6.150 Evacuation exercises should be held in all departments annually. (5.26)
- 6.151 Fire escape routes should be surveyed and made adequate in all respects. (5.27)
- 6.152 A fire damper and access door should be fitted in all ventilation ducts where they pass through fire stop walls. (5.28)

Finance

- 6.153 Services to prisoners should not be diminished. (5.30)

Strategy

- 6.154 Programmes for induction and pre-release needed to be developed. (5.37)

GOOD PRACTICE

Reception

- 6.155 The sensitive manner in which staff carried out strip-searching was impressive. (1.09)

Good Order

- 6.156 Prisoners were treated with friendly courtesy and as individual human beings. (1.42)

Spiritual Activities

- 6.157 The establishment of a mosque. (2.47)

Catering

- 6.158 The standard of cleaning for the heated trolleys was the best we have seen. (2.59)
- 6.159 We were impressed by the quality of food being served, the presentation of the individual dishes, the size of the portions and the temperature of the food being collected even at the end of the serving period. (2.62)

Education

- 6.160 The quality of the needs analysis procedures and recording systems within Shepton Mallet's Education Department were exemplary. (3.15)
- 6.161 The quality of teaching was generally high, and no poor teaching was seen. (3.21)
- 6.162 The positive learning atmosphere in the Education Department was strongly supported by a prison ethos that showed clearly the value placed on education, and by the good relations that existed between the Prison Senior Management, Prison Officers and Education staff. (3.21)

6.163 The management of the Education Department within the prison was excellent.
(3.33)

Physical Education

6.164 Every prisoner received a small pocket guide with a timetable of the PE programme.
(3.43)

Works

6.165 We were pleased to see the speed with which the Works Department dealt with a number of minor defects pointed out during the inspection. (5.11)

INSPECTION TEAM

Sir David Ramsbotham	HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
Mr Rod Jacques	Team Leader
Mrs Ruth Whitehead	Inspector
Mr Ferdie Parker	Inspector
Ms Debbie Mckay	Inspector
Dr John Reed	Specialist Inspector (Health Care)
Mr Eddie Killoran	Specialist Inspector (Drugs)
Mr Sandy Ratcliffe	Specialist Inspector (Estate)
Mr Bernard Moroney	Specialist Inspector (Dentistry)
Ms Mairi Christie	Specialist Inspector (Education)
Mr Chris Clarke	Specialist Inspector (Education)
Mr Chris Collier	Specialist Inspector (Pharmacy)