



INSPECTING AND MONITORING

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Ms Angie Zelter  
6 Church Street  
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Dear Ms Zelter,

Thank you for your letter, sent following your release from HMP Edinburgh.

As HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland I was interested to read of your experience of your time on remand in both HMP & YOI Cornton Vale and HMP Edinburgh.

It was particularly interesting to read your observations about how prison life had changed since your previous incarceration in Cornton Vale in 1999. I am glad that you perceived a significant improvement in the conditions in which you were held: improved accommodation, better food, access to exercise in the open air, and the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities. I was also pleased that you found the staff to be pleasant, helpful, caring and professional.

I also noted your comments about less positive aspects of your experience: access to your medication - particularly at the point of your transfer from Cornton Vale to Edinburgh – lack of access to word processing facilities, and the conditions in which you were released from Dumbarton Sheriff Court.

As HM Chief Inspector, I have responsibility for inspecting and monitoring the 15 prisons in Scotland. Our findings in recent months have largely matched your own observations. In general we have found the relationships between prisoners and staff to be respectful and constructive. The Scottish Prison Service have made considerable efforts to improve the opportunities for purposeful activity for all prisoners, particularly women.

We inspected HMP Edinburgh earlier this year and published our inspection report in June, a copy of which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.prisonssinspectoratescotland.gov.uk/publications/report-hmp-edinburgh-6-17-march-2017>

We commented on the difficulty prisoners experienced in receiving the correct medication, particularly if they were transferred too quickly from Cornton Vale.

I agree with you that people in prison would benefit from greater access to computers, particularly in the light of the increasingly electronic world they will find on their release. I have commented in several of my reports on the need for adequate support for people leaving prison at the end of their sentence, particularly in the first few days and in relation to the basics required for safe living, such as accommodation, healthcare and adequate financial support.

I am grateful to you for taking the trouble to write and will use the information you have provided to inform our monitoring and inspecting activities in both Cornton Vale and Edinburgh, and more widely in Scotland's prisons.

Yours sincerely

David Strang

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HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

As HM Chief Inspector, I have responsibility for inspecting and monitoring the 15 prisons in Scotland. Our findings in recent months have largely matched your own observations. In general we have found the relationships between prisoners and staff to be respectful and constructive. The Future Prisons Strategy, published in 2011, sets out our vision for the future of the Scottish prison system.