



HEADQUARTERS
Calton House
5 Redheughs Rigg
Edinburgh
EH12 9HW

Teresa Medhurst
Chief Executive

Tel: 0131 330 3601

Ms Audrey Nicoll MSP
Convenor, Criminal Justice Committee
Justice Committee Clerks
Room T2.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Email: justicecommittee@parliament.scot

19 May 2022

Dear Ms Nicoll

UPDATE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE PHOTOCOPYING OF GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

In December 2021 a change was made to Prison Rules which provided SPS with the power to photocopy prisoner's general correspondence as an operational mitigation against the risk of the introduction of illicit substances through contaminated paper entering prisons.

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans Mr Keith Brown appeared before the Criminal Justice Committee on 12 January 2022 and provided an update, intimating that the change in Prison Rules was having a positive impact. I would like to offer the following information as a further update to the Committee and provide the current position of SPS to highlight the continued positive impact that the change is having on operational concerns and those in our care.

Present Position

The implementation of photocopying of general correspondence continues to have a positive impact across all establishments. There has been a steady and sustained reduction in 'drug takes incidents' throughout the estate which has reduced SPS need to call upon external support from NHS and Scottish Ambulance Service colleagues. The table below shows the overall number of 'drug takes' incidents and emergency ambulances reported over the last 6 months, highlighting the decline since the change to Prison Rules in December 2021; it is helpful to note that although an incident is recorded as a singular event, the incident itself may have several individuals involved therefore the numbers of individuals who are positively affected by this decline may be significantly higher than the number of incidents recorded:

Month	Number of 'drug takes' incidents*	Emergency Ambulances – drug related
October 21	248	39
November 21	305	37
December 21	175	21
January 22	172	24
February 22	97	22
March 22	112	22

The above figures show an average reduction of 44% of 'drug takes' incidents since the implementation, the need for an emergency ambulance also reduced by an average of 39% over the same period.


Whilst the testing of mail using the Rapiscan drug detection machines continues, establishments are reporting that the number of mail items being sent in overall has reduced. There has also been a significant reduction in the number of mail items testing positive for illicit substances. However, there is an indication that alternative methods to introduce illicit have increased over the same period.

Governance

The SPS 'Prisoner Correspondence Policy and Guidance' has been updated to incorporate the national process for authorising and reviewing the photocopying of general correspondence. Prisoner Resource Library (PRL) Standards now reflect the changes and provide assurance that policy and any changes are adhered to throughout the SPS estate. HMIPS may choose to audit establishments against PRL standards at any time.

I hope that you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely



TERESA MEDHURST
Chief Executive