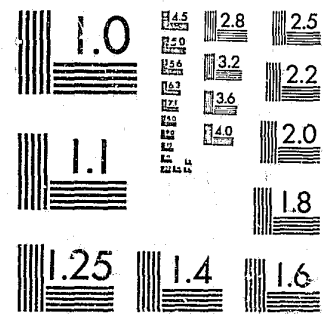


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WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

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THE PRISONER'S CONTACTS

WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

THROUGH

VISITING, CORRESPONDENCE AND HOME LEAVE

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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FOREWORD

This study is unique in that it is the first time the department has obtained the views of serving prisoners about a particular area of penal policy and prison administration.

The information drawn from the study raises questions for answer in two specific areas.

First, if it is accepted as a general statement that a person sentenced to imprisonment is more likely to be satisfactorily re-integrated if the family and community ties he or she has can be retained at a level that can best (or only) be achieved by regular personal contact, why are so many prisoners being held in prisons where that contact is geographically difficult or prohibitively expensive?

Secondly, given the assumption as to re-integration and the rules relating to eligibility for home leave, why are relatively few prisoners actually receiving this leave?

The study shows that although almost 70% of sentenced prisoners resided within reasonable distance of a penal institution accessible by public transport, only 25% were detained in that institution. Security classification is obviously a factor here, and the public interest requires that prisoners be held in at a level of security sufficient to ensure public safety. Nevertheless, it is also very much in the public interest that re-offending be reduced. Indeed the recent report of the Penal Policy Review Committee (1981) identifies this as a major aim of penal policy. A high level of successful re-integration is an important element in achieving such a reduction.

The evidence indicates that ongoing family and community contacts contributes to successful re-integration. It is then necessary to carefully consider in individual cases how the sometimes conflicting public interests can best be met. The classification of prisoners is obviously the point when this decision has to be made. The contribution to successful re-integration by maintaining family and community ties needs to be in the mind of those involved in the classification decision. The development of more heterogeneous regional prisons will, I believe, assist in resolving this dilemma.

As to home leave this should also be viewed as a policy designed primarily to aid the continuation of family contacts and to assist in successful re-integration. The reasons why only little more than half of the eligible prisoners apply are no doubt many and varied. However, of those who are eligible and do apply (if our sample is a true reflection), more than 53% have their application refused. We certainly need to re-examine our policy in this area.

The aspects of policy examined in this study are of considerable importance in the context of developing a through-care model designed to assist in prisoner re-integration and hence a reduction in the level of re-offending. The information given must now be used positively for the purpose of critically examining existing policy and developing new policy to meet the objectives of the penal system.

This study relied on prisoners responding in a positive and helpful way by completing a questionnaire. The level of participation was high and the responses were almost uniformly constructive. Appendix A to the report provides an example. Our particular thanks to the inmates who participated.

We also thank prison superintendents and, in particular, the education officers in institutions who supervised the completion of the questionnaires. No doubt their attitude contributed to the high response rate.

The research was undertaken by Mrs Ngaire Bennie of the Research Unit of the Planning and Development Division. Editing of the report was undertaken by Mr Colin Bevan, an Assistant Research Officer.

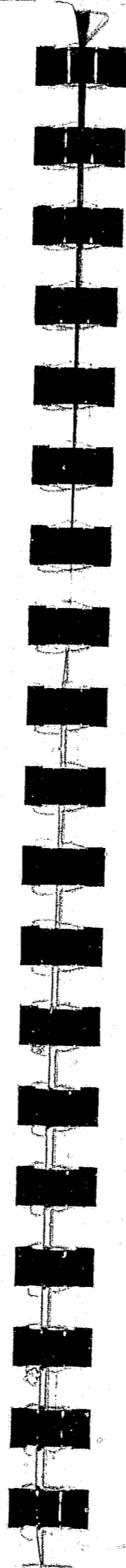
M.P. SMITH
DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION



ABSTRACT

This study looks at the extent and frequency of inmate contact with family and friends through visiting, correspondence and home leave, taking into consideration the distance between the inmate's home town and place of incarceration. The information is given by inmates themselves by way of a questionnaire, with further data provided from inmate files. Results indicated that only about 30% of the sample received visits from family or friends at least once a fortnight, but that the frequency was affected by the distance between the home town and the institution. Respondents generally wanted more people to visit them and for visitors to come more often.

By recognizing the value of inmate contact with the community, it is hoped that this study will provide useful background information to be taken into consideration when planning the location of future penal institutions.



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1: Introduction

Planning for the future provision of penal institutions requires careful consideration of a number of factors - prediction of future trends in sentencing (both numbers and length) and therefore prison musters, the continuing role imprisonment will play in penal policy and the types of institutions required to fulfil this, the educational, work, recreational and social facilities to be provided for inmates are some of the more obvious considerations.

An important factor, especially when one considers the value of retaining the inmate near to his home, yet often neglected and frequently overshadowed by others, is the location of the institutions. Penal institutions have in the past, tended to be located in remote areas and away from public transport, making contact with and by the community extremely difficult. There are a number of advantages in siting penal institutions in the community, but the outrage by residents at having an institution constructed in the neighbourhood creates formidable problems in implementing such a policy.

In terms of the rehabilitation of the offender, the transition from the institution to the community upon release is eased where there has been regular contact with family and or friends during incarceration. If regular contact is hindered through problems associated with the distance between the institution and family or friends, then relationships will suffer. Studies have shown the value of maintaining relationships with the family during this period. They have indicated that recidivism rates among prisoners receiving regular family visits are lower than those not receiving regular visits (Holt and Millar, 1972; Adams and Fischer 1976). These indications have led in the USA to recommendations for encouraging visitors and practical suggestions for such encouragement (National Advisory Commission, 1973).

A study of long term prisoners in America indicated that the loss of relationships with family and friends was consistently mentioned by inmates as the most serious deprivation, when asked to describe their single most important serious problem (Flanagan, 1980).

With regard to the important role of the family in the reintegration of the offender back into society, the present study was undertaken to ascertain the present level of inmate contact with family and friends through visiting, correspondence and home leave, taking into consideration the distance between the inmate's home town and place of incarceration. As well as providing useful background material to be taken into consideration when planning the location of future penal institutions, this study reveals interesting insights into inmates' perceptions of visiting, maintaining relationships with persons outside prison, and their immediate environment.

The present paper is divided into five further parts: Part II discusses methodology and the sample; Part III presents the information gathered from the questionnaire given to inmates; Part IV provides further information from inmate files; Part V includes a summary and discussion; Part VI gives the conclusion and recommendations.

2: Study Design

(a) Methodology

Two sources of information were used, the main source being a questionnaire given to inmates, the other being inmate files. Thus the study was taken from the inmate's point of view rather from that of the administration. Obviously the latter cannot be ignored, but the inmate has in the past had less opportunity of making an input.

To ensure that the questions were appropriate and thus the answers to questions valid, the sampling frame was defined as -

- all women serving a prison sentence
- all detention centre trainees
- all youths (males and females) who had completed six months of borstal training
- all males who had completed half of their prison sentence, or five years in the case of lifers and preventive detention inmates

with all having served a minimum of one month. Inmates whose address at arrest was an overseas one were deleted, as were inmates on release to work.

Selection of this sample was based on the premise that the majority of borstal trainees, detention centre trainees and female inmates would not be transferred from the institution in which they were received because of the limited number of institutions catering for the groups, and that the majority of male inmates who were halfway through their sentence would remain in the same institution until the end of their sentence.

4.

This sampling frame was applied to the penal population as at 19 November 1979 and the questionnaire administered between this date and 20 December 1979. After two pre-tests in three institutions, questionnaires to be completed by the inmates were sent out to institutions with a covering note, including instructions for administering the questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered by the education officer (where there was one), otherwise the prison chaplain, or other person where the former could not oblige. Questionnaires were self completed by the inmates with assistance where requested, and in recommended groups of no more than five. Three of the larger institutions were visited to give assistance and advice in the initial stages.

The majority of respondents were co-operative in completing the questionnaire, although there were some inconsistent answers that necessitated editing. This information from the questionnaire was supplemented by data from files. Waikeria borstal trainees and Arohata prisoners having been sampled were reweighted for the final analysis.

Since the questionnaire was completed in December 1979 there have been some significant developments in the administration of penal policy: the opening of the Manawatu Youth Institution in 1979 and the new Auckland Medium Security Prison in late 1981, the phasing out of borstal training and the introduction of corrective training.

(b) The Sample

In all 699 inmates formed the sampling frame, with 529 in the final analysis. The 170 not included had been transferred, had declined to participate or were not available at the time the questionnaire was given. More specific details are given in Table 1.

5.

Table 1: Sample Details

<u>Status</u>	Selected in Sample (2)	<u>Total Numbers</u> (1)		
		Questionnaires Completed	Declined or not Available	Transferred
Female borstal trainees	3	3	-	-
Female prisoners	54	44	1	9
Male borstal trainees	186	174	12	-
Detention centre trainees	45	40	3	2
Male prisoners	381	268	56	57
Total	669	529	72	68

(1) reweighted

(2) Some inmates selected in the original sample were later found not to meet the requirements for selection, e.g they were overseas residents, had already been released. These were deleted and are not included in this total.

Of those selected, 10.8% declined the invitation to participate or were not available and a further 10.2% transferred to another institution, leaving a proportion of 79.1% to be included in the study. Those included in the final group are assumed to be representative of the original sample selected.

6.

Table 2: Institution

<u>Borstal Training</u>	<u>Population</u> ⁽³⁾	<u>Number In Sample</u>	<u>%</u>
Arohata	48	3	6.3
Invercargill	178	45	25.3
Waikeria	390	129	33.1
Sub-total	616	177	28.7
<u>Detention Centre</u>			
Hautu	59	23	39.0
Rolleston	38	15	39.5
Waikeria	5	2	40.0
Sub-total	102	40	39.2
<u>Prisons</u>			
Arohata	20	12	60.0
Christchurch Women's	53	31	58.5
Mt Eden Women's	21	1	4.8
Auckland	174	19	10.9
Christchurch	271	37	13.7
Dunedin	35	7	20.0
Manawatu	26	2	7.7
Mt Eden	316	37	11.7
Napier	30	1	3.3
New Plymouth	49	7	14.3
Ohura	44	5	11.4
Rangipo	151	31	20.5
Rolleston	64	8	12.5
Tongariro	18	14	77.8
Waikeria	78	6	7.7
Waikune	94	21	22.3
Wanganui	176	33	18.8
Wellington	131	23	17.6
Wi Tako	150	17	11.3
Sub total	1901	312	16.4
TOTAL	2619	529	20.2

(3) As at 19.11.79. Excludes escapees and those committed to a mental hospital.

7.

A further breakdown according to institution is given in Table 2. This indicates the proportion that the selected sample represents of the total population, averaging 16.4% of the prison population, 28.7% of the borstal population, and 39.2% of the detention centre population, with an overall 20.2% represented.

3: Analysis of Questionnaire

The questionnaire covered various aspects of visiting, including who visitors are, the frequency of visits, the visitors' means of transport, factors the inmate considered affected the frequency of visits, whether the inmate desires more visits, whether the inmate likes visitors at all and their reasons, and whether a greater range of visitors is desired. This information is presented in the preceding text, and is further cross-tabulated with the inmate's home town and the institution he is located in at the time of the survey. Further information collected in the questionnaire on the extent and frequency of correspondence is presented, and considered as another means of communication. Finally, the location given by the inmate as the most preferable one at which to serve the sentence is analysed in relation to the institution the inmate was in at the time, along with reasons for making such a choice.

(a) Visiting

(i) Frequency of Visits

Each respondent was asked who their visitors were and how often these people visited. This is given in Table 3. In terms of the unofficial visitors, spouses and defactos of respondents are more likely to visit than any other one group, with only 32.7% of married inmates having never received a visit from their spouse or defacto. Not only are they more likely to visit, but they visit more often than any other group, with 36.5% of those visiting coming weekly and 49.5% at least fortnightly. The next most likely visitors are siblings with 47.4% of respondents having received such visitors, closely followed by friends (46.2%), mother (45.8%), girl/boyfriend (43.1%) and children (42.3%).

Table 3: Visitors and Their Frequency of Visits

Visitor	Frequency					Sub-Total	Never	Total
	Weekly	Fort-nightly	Monthly	3-mthly	Less than 3 mthly			
'Unofficial'								
Spouse/Defacto	39	14	17	8	29	107	52	159
Children	20	16	12	7	22	77	105	182
Grand parents	-	-	10	5	30	45	268	313
Mother	17	24	52	43	73	209	247	456
Father	15	15	32	35	48	145	254	399
Siblings	22	20	41	46	112	241	267	508
Relatives	7	10	9	23	70	119	381	500
Girl/Boy-friend	37	16	26	7	52	138	182	320
Friends	19	19	36	48	118	240	279	519
'Official'								
A.A. sponsor	4	-	3	1	5	13	469	482
Church visitor	21	14	2	5	14	56	428	484
Employer	-	-	1	8	7	16	458	474
PARS visitor	12	54	30	7	26	129	356	485
Other official	7	2	8	2	22	41	440	481

In terms of frequency of visits of those who do visit, the order is quite different, with children following spouse/defacto. Of the inmates with children visiting, 46.8% received such visits at least fortnightly. This is followed by girl/boyfriend, with 38.4% receiving at least fortnightly visits.

Grandparents and relatives are the least likely to visit, with 85.6% and 76.2% respectively of the inmates never having received such visitors. In terms of frequency of those who do visit, grandparents followed by relatives and friends feature the least.

A number of respondents had received visits from 'official' visitors. These included such people as AA sponsor, church visitor, employer, PARS visitor and others. Respondents were more likely to have received a visit from a PARS visitor than any other 'official' visitor (26.6%), but in terms of frequency of those visiting, church visitors are likely to visit more often.

Table 4: Frequency of Visits by Family and Friends, in relation to Length of Sentence Served

Frequency	Length of Sentence Served							Total
	0 - 5 mths	6 - 11 mths	1 yr to under 1 1/2 yrs	1 1/2 yrs to under 2 yrs	2 yrs to under 3 yrs	3 yrs to under 5 yrs	5 yrs +	
Weekly	34	28	19	9	11	6	1	108
Fortnightly	16	26	5	3	6	1	1	58
Monthly	12	31	13	5	4	5	2	72
3-monthly	6	30	1	5	4	4	2	52
Less than 3-monthly	23	55	9	16	8	9	1	121
Never	44	45	18	1	7	2	0	117
Total	135	215	65(4)	39	40	27	7	528

(4) Excludes one person who indicated he had no family/friends.

A measure of how often inmates receive visits from family and friends is indicated in Table 4. This, although not a precise measure because of the format of the questionnaire, does indicate the minimum frequency of such visits. An inmate receiving fortnightly visits alternately from both friends and parents would be receiving weekly visits, but would only appear under fortnightly visits in Table 4.

What is noted is the size of the proportion that have never received visits (22.2%), although the median time served by these inmates is slightly less than that for the overall sample, 8.0 months as opposed to 9.6 months. The median time served for those receiving weekly visits, at 10.3 months, is slightly more than the overall median.

Time served does not appear to be a significant variable in terms of the frequency of visits, although this conclusion is limited by the fact that the study is not a longitudinal one. The proportion of people who received frequent visits does not consistently increase or decrease as time served increases.

(i) Means of Transport

The respondent was asked to indicate the most common means of transport used by the various visitors. The car was by far the most common method of getting to the institution, being the main form of transport for 79.1 % of the visitors. Spouses and defactos are the least likely of the visitors to use a car and rely on public transport much more than any other category of visitor. This is most probably a reflection of the general financial hardship experienced by the spouse or defacto particularly when children are involved.

(ii) Attitude of those Receiving Visits Toward Frequency of Visits

Respondents were asked whether they would like to receive visits more frequently from those already visiting. Where the question applied, the largest number, 217, indicated positively, 73 indicated negatively and 43 were undecided (a number did not answer the question). So where a response was elicited, 65.2% wanted the people who had already visited to visit more often. Where such a response was indicated, respondents were asked the reasons why they thought people weren't coming as often as they wished. Those reasons given are obviously subjective ones, but are considered to have merit.

(iv) Factors Affecting Frequency of Visits

The largest proportion (68.4%) indicated transport problems as the reason for visits being restricted (see Table 5). This includes both the cost of travelling and the lack of transport, either private or public. Petrol restrictions limiting sales to weekdays, operative at this time, also had an effect. This category reflects the general inaccessibility of penal institutions and the general requirement under the present policy, for individuals to be sent away from their home area for the term of their sentence. Commitments, the next largest category, refers to other commitments that visitors have and general limitations restricting opportunities for visits e.g. work commitments, are invalids.

Table 5: Factors Restricting Visits, According to Type of Institution⁽⁵⁾

Reason	Specialist		Camps		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Transport	72	67.9	27	96.4	46	59.0	145	68.4
Commitments	16	15.1	1	3.6	12	15.4	29	13.7
Motivation	-	-	-	-	1	1.3	1	0.5
Communication	2	1.9	-	-	1	1.3	3	1.4
Restrictions	9	8.5	-	-	9	11.5	18	8.5
Conditions	7	6.6	-	-	7	9.0	14	6.6
Other	-	-	-	-	2	2.6	2	0.9
Total	106	100.0	28	100.0	78	100.0	212	100.0

(5) Specialist: includes borstals, detention centres, youth prisons, all female institutions and Auckland (maximum).

Camp: includes Rangipo, Tongariro, Ohura and Waikune, all located in relatively isolated areas.

Other: includes all other institutions. All of these are in or close to a major town or city.

The combined categories, "restrictions" and "conditions", forming 15.1% of the total, refer to those imposed by the institution (including physical) or prison administration. These include such comments as 'are ex-inmates', 'visiting passes limit visits', 'visiting hours not long enough for amount of time spent travelling', and 'don't like atmosphere of the institution'. One inmate felt strongly enough about the atmosphere and physical surroundings of visiting to include a special page making suggestions for improvement (see Appendix A). Visiting arrangements presently operating in institutions are given in Appendix B.

"Communication" refers to lack of contact and "other" includes comments such as personal preference, lack of motivation on the part of the visitors.

When this is further analysed according to the type of institution ('specialist', 'camp', 'other'), the frequency of the various factors differ (see Table 5). Transport problems are more evident for those in 'camps' (96.4%) than in 'specialist' and 'other' institutions, and the least evident in 'other' institutions (59%). In fact for 'camps' transport problems are of such a degree that they almost completely override the mention of any other reason given for affecting the frequency of visits. For both the 'specialist' institutions and 'other' institutions, other commitments that the visitor has is the next most common factor mentioned, followed by restrictions and conditions.

Of the 212 offering a reason, 79 offered a second reason within the same general categories as above.

(v) Do Inmates Like Receiving Visits?

Question: Do you like having visitors?
Answer: 'Do they like visiting prisons?'

Question: Do you like having visitors?
Answer: 'When they come and see me'

Question: What are your reasons for saying this?
Answer: 'I get a chance to smoke tailor's made smokes and listen to the latest gossip.'

Although the premise that visits are advantageous for the inmate was adopted, the question of whether respondents enjoyed visits needed to be asked. In preliminary discussions it became evident that some inmates had a love/hate relationship with visiting. With visits being at a set time each week the visits were preceded by an emotionally charged feeling of anticipation, wondering whether anyone would come. When visitors did come there was an initial experience of elation, but sometimes there was little to say and soon both would be eagerly awaiting the word for time up. Often there was a lot to say, but the physical surroundings, not being at all conducive to personal communication, inhibited such discourse and again resulting in awkward silences. Talk can be reduced to a superficial level with an interchange of trivial information. Visits whether enjoyed or not were often followed by post-visit depression. Despite such experiences the next visit would soon be eagerly awaited.

Similar experiences were referred to by John Justin in his book 'Prisoner', based on his experiences as an inmate at Mt Crawford and Wi Tako Prison's -

'Every week you counted the days to visiting and when it came you hoped it would end quickly Many times, after these visits, I would go to my cell and lie on my bed. The tears would come. I could not stop them. At first I thought it was just me. Later I found many others felt and did the same. There was so much we wanted to say to our wives and our children.'

Of the 441 receiving visits 378 answered the question. The largest proportion, 60.6%, indicated that they liked having visitors very much. Other feelings towards having visitors are listed in Table 6.

Table 6 : Inmate Attitude Toward Visits

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
like visits very much	229	60.6
like visits a little	56	14.8
indifferent	69	18.3
do not like visits much	12	3.2
do not like visits at all	12	3.2
Total	378	100.0

These feelings were justified by comments which are presented in Table 7. The largest single proportion (37.6%) gave reasons included in the category 'emotional uplift'. This includes such comments as 'enjoy their company', 'like to see them', 'good to find out how they are'. A further 26.6% indicated advantages in having contact with the outside, maintaining relationships, relating to people on the outside and keeping in contact.

Table 7: Reason for Attitude Held on Visiting

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Emotional uplift	123	37.6
Advantages in contact with the outside	87	26.6
Relief	27	8.3
Understands visitor's problems	15	4.6
Advantages in not having visitors	20	6.1
Emotional upheaval	12	3.7
Time served	3	0.9
Indifference	22	6.7
Other	18	5.5
Total	327	100.0

To 8.3% of the respondents, the reason given was that visits provided some relief to the monotony of prison life; 4.6% indicated some understanding of the problems confronting visitors (including the treatment given them); 6.1% indicated advantages in not having visitors; and 3.7% referred to negative emotional experiences of visiting. Forty-two gave a second comment with the same categories.

(vi) The Wish for Visits From People Who Had Not Yet Visited

Question: Why don't they visit you?⁽⁶⁾
 Answer: 'Some of them don't no I'm here some don't kear'

Question: Why don't they visit you?
 Answer: 'They don't like the thought of seeing me in here. They think that prison is like a dungeon like Mt Eden and they have a fear of the unknown. They also don't know what to say and it frightens them'

(6) This question given in the pre-test, was amended for the final questionnaire.

Of those who responded 'yes' or 'no' to the question 'Is there anyone that you would like as a visitor but who has not visited you yet?' 362 indicated positively (71.7%) and 143 negatively (28.3%). Of those replying positively, they indicated on average three categories of family, friends or relatives (out of nine choices) from whom they would like to receive visits. Forty-seven indicated they would like to receive a visit from one of or more of the 'official' visitors.

Respondents were again asked why they thought these people had not yet visited. The reasons given followed much the same ranking as in Table 5, although transport problems were more critical and lack of motivation on the part of the visitor and lack of contact were mentioned more often (each representing 4%).

(vii) Home Town in Relation to the Location of Institution, and Extent of Visiting

There was some difficulty in coming to a definition of home town because of the expectation that respondents would form a relatively mobile population. Ultimately the definition taken was the place where the respondent had spent three months or more, within the year prior to incarceration. Where two or more places were indicated, the one where the respondent had spent the longest was selected. If the time periods were equal, as in several cases, the first place mentioned was selected.

As it turned out 12.7% had not been in one place for three months or more prior to incarceration. Of those who had, there appeared to be a general stability of residence with 61.4% being in the specified locality for two years or more. It is not known though how this would compare to the general population with the same age/sex structure. Of the 169 who had been in the specified locality for less than two years (but more than three months), 36.7% had been there for under six months.

Table 8 cross-tabulates the institution the respondent was in at the time of the questionnaire with the home town of that respondent, where known. From Table 8 it appears that, generally, although inmates are not retained in their home town (see Part IV), they are kept as near as possible to their home town within the restrictions imposed by the classification of institutions e.g. minimum, or the sentence type e.g. borstal. These restrictions result in a large number of inmates being accommodated some distance from their home town. Auckland, without a minimum security institution is particularly affected by the restriction of classification. The bracketed percentages show the proportion of inmates from each area actually residing in local prisons.

Table 8: Proximity of Institution to Inmate's Home Area

Home area	<u>Institution</u>									
	Auck/Mt Eden	Waikeria	Rangipo/Hautu Tongariro	Napier	Waikune/Ohura	New Ply/Wanganui Manawatu	Wellington/Wi Tako/ Arohata	ChCh/Rolleston	Dunedin/Invercargill	Total
Whangarei/ Auckland	29 (18%)	57	25	-	6	13	16	13	4	163
Hamilton/ Tauranga/ Whakatane	2	33 (58%)	7	-	4	5	2	3	1	57
Rotorua/Taupo	-	15 (81%)	2	-	-	-	1	2	1	21
Gisborne/ Hastings/ Napier	2	8	12 (39%)	1	1	3	5	-	1	33
New Plymouth/ Wanganui/ Palmerston North	1	8	6	-	4 (30%)	5	5	-	1	30
Masterton/ Wellington	7	3	4	-	5	4	20 (33%)	6	13	62
Nelson/ Greymouth	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	1	5
Christchurch/ Timaru	3	-	1	-	1	-	1	40 (68%)	13	59
Dunedin/ Invercargill	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	12	11 (46%)	24
TOTAL	44	124	57	1	21	33	50	78	46	454

Table 9 is restricted to inmates receiving at least fortnightly visits and looks at the institution in relation to their home town. Because numbers are small in many of the cells in Table 9, significant conclusions are not possible, but it does appear that those inmates closest to their home town receive visits more frequently. This is particularly evident in Christchurch institutions where 85% of inmates coming from Christchurch/Timaru receive at least fortnightly visits compared to 31% of those coming from Whangarei/Auckland and 17% coming from Masterton/Wellington.

Table 9: Those Receiving Weekly or Fortnightly Visits, by Home Area and Institution

Home area	Institution									Total
	Auck/Mt Eden	Waikeria	Rangipo/Hautu Tongariro	Napier	Waikane/Ohura	New Ply/Wanganui Manawatu	Wellington/Wi Tako/ Arohata	Ch Ch/Rolleston	Dunedin/Inver- cargill	
Whangarei/ Auckland	16 (55%)	12 (21%)	2	-	0	2	6 (38%)	4 (31%)	0	42
Hamilton/ Tauranga Whakatane	0	19 (57%)	1	-	1	0	0	1	0	22
Rotorua/Taupo	-	3	0	-	-	-	0	2	0	5
Gisborne/ Hastings/ Napier	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	-	0	5
New Plymouth/ Wanganui/ Palmerston North	0	0	0	-	3	3	1	-	0	7
Masterton/ Wellington	3	0	0	-	1	1	14 (70%)	1 (17%)	1	21
Nelson/ Greymouth	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	0	0	2
Christchurch/ Timaru	1	-	0	-	1	-	0	34 (85%)	1	37
Dunedin/ Invercargill	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	3	4	7
TOTAL	21	34	4	1	7	9	21	45	6	148

Note:

- (1) "0" means that there are inmates in this institution from this locality but none are receiving visits.
"-" means that there are no inmates in this institution from this locality.
- (2) Percentage in brackets refers to the proportion of inmates in this institution and from this locality receiving weekly or fortnightly visits.

(b) Correspondence

Of those answering the question 'Have you received any personal letters since you came here?', 504 (95.6%) said yes and 23 (4.4%) no. The frequency of contact with family/friends through letters and visits is represented in Table 10 (excluding those who did not answer either one or both of the two relevant questions). From this table it can be seen that the category "weekly visits" and "weekly letters" forms the largest group, followed by "weekly letters" and "less than three monthly visits". Of those who were not receiving visits from family/friends, 60.3% received letters at least fortnightly. Of those who were not receiving letters, the largest single proportion were also not receiving visits.

Table 10: Frequency of Contact with Family/Friends

<u>Frequency</u> <u>Receive</u> <u>Letters</u>	<u>Frequency of Visits</u> ⁽⁷⁾						Total
	weekly	fortnightly	monthly	3 monthly	less than 3 monthly	never	
weekly	64	39	26	29	49	39	246
fortnightly	24	7	25	5	28	31	120
monthly	7	6	9	14	17	15	68
3-monthly	4	4	5	-	11	9	33
6-monthly and less	5	-	5	3	9	11	33
never	3	1	2	1	6	11	24
TOTAL	107	57	72	52	120	116	524

(7) As defined for Table 4

So although most respondents have maintained some degree of contact, there is a cluster where it is considered that this contact is not of a sufficient frequency, and loss of contact with family and friends is a possibility. This is particularly so for those receiving visits and letters once every three months or less frequently (61, or 11.6% of the group in Table 10).

(c) Location Selected for Serving Time, and Reason for Choice

"The institutional environment is by no means a habitat for any human form or species. Its atmosphere is rank and the hate and suppression is in abundance. Should be eradicated from human history."
(Inmate's comment)

Question: Now, I would like you to imagine that there was an institution, identical to the one you are now in, at the places listed below. If you were given a choice which one would you choose?

Answer: "None"

Respondents were asked to indicate the geographical location where they would prefer to serve their sentence, and the reason for making this particular choice. Table 11 gives this choice of locality in relation to the institution the respondent was in. Thus it gives the distribution within each institution of the preferred locations (the columns) and each location's draw on the various institutions (the rows).

Referring to the row totals and column totals respectively in Table 11, more respondents would like to have served their time in the Auckland area (146) than actually did (54), with 42.6% of those in Auckland at the time wishing to stay there. In both Hamilton and Invercargill the reverse holds, where fewer would have liked to serve their time in these centres than actually did. This is probably a result of the 'specialist' nature of the institutions (borstal) and their large catchment areas. Wanganui and Christchurch are two other localities where fewer people in the sample would choose to go than were actually held in the institutions.

Table 11: Institution by Choice of Locality for Serving Time

Locality	Institution											Total
	Auck/Mt Eden	Waikeria	Rangipo/Hautu Tongariro	Napier	Waikune/Ohura	New Plymouth	Wanganui/Manawatu	Wellington/Wi Tako/ Arohata	ChCh/Rolleston	Dunedin	Invercargill	
Kaitaia	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	-	1	9	
Whangarei	3	3	6	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	15	
Auckland	23	52	25	-	4	3	6	16	14	-	146	
Hamilton	4	22	3	-	4	1	6	2	4	-	47	
Rotorua	5	28	3	-	2	-	2	1	2	-	47	
Gisborne	2	4	4	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	14	
New Plymouth	1	-	4	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	9	
Napier	1	-	11	1	2	1	2	5	1	-	25	
Wanganui	2	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	7	
Palmerston North	1	5	1	-	2	-	3	3	1	-	17	
Masterton	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	
Wellington	3	4	5	-	5	-	5	11	6	-	50	
Blenheim	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	5	
Greymouth	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	
Christchurch	5	3	-	-	1	-	1	4	31	2	62	
Dunedin	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	11	2	19	
Invercargill	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	14	
TOTAL	54	127	65	1	24	6	32	51	80	7	45	492

Table 12 gives the reasons put forward for selecting the locality in which to serve time. The overwhelming majority (86.5%) supported their choice for the purpose of being close to family and/or friends. Some caution is required here although the question was open-ended, the overall essence of the questionnaire relates to visiting. This may have had a generalising effect on any thinking in relation to the questions and subsequent responses. Despite this, it is clear that this factor is considered an important one by the inmates.

Table 12: Reason

	Number	Percentage
proximity to family/friends	415	86.5%
desirable location (physical/environmental)	23	4.8%
familiarity	5	1.0%
convenient for work/ release	4	0.8%
anonymity	9	1.9%
other	24	5.0%
TOTAL	480	100.0%

4: Analysis of Information From Other Sources

This section of the report deals with information collected from inmate files, including whether there was an institution near the inmate's home town, whether or not the inmate was in that institution, and why the inmate was held or not held in that particular institution. Information collected on home leave is also presented.

(a) Are Prisoners in Institutions Near Their Home Town?

Where the criterion for home town was met it was found that of the 473 respondents, 316 (66.8%) lived near a penal institution. This was defined as to be within reach by local public transport or up to two miles from a local public transport system. Of these, 80 (25.3%) would spend the larger part of their sentence in the local prison if they served the rest of their sentence without further transfer.

Reasons for being retained in that institution (given in Table 13) were mainly to do with classification requirements (other than security). This was where the 'local' institution was of a 'specialist' type that coincided with the offender or their sentence. For example, first offender and first offender institution, female and female prison, short sentence and short-term prison, borstal and borstal institution. This was followed by the 'local' institution being a security classification appropriate to that of the respondent. Of the total (excluding those where the reason is not known), 16.4% were retained due to a personal request. This category also includes those who made the request to be retained where their security status was one that was appropriate to that institution.

Of those transferred away from the 'local' institution (236), the main reason (excluding those where the reason is not known) was again due to non-security classification requirements (68.2%) and, secondly, security classification (27.4%). In this instance 4% were transferred following a personal request.

Table 13: Reasons for Being Retained or Transferred From the Local Institution

<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Retained</u>		<u>Transferred</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	
Classification (other than Security)	20	27.4	152	68.2	172
Security	16	21.9	61	27.4	77
Personal	12	16.4	9	4.0	21
Medical/Psychiatric	3	4.1	1	0.4	4
Other	22	30.1	-	-	22
Total	73	100.0	223	100.0	296

These results give weight to the comment made previously that although the general policy is to retain offenders as close to their home town as possible the prevailing need to meet classification requirements ensures that the larger proportion do not remain in the local institution.

(b) Home Leave

Home leave is another means by which the inmate is able to maintain contact with family and/or friends. It also has another facet in that the contact occurs in a more suitable environment, giving greater opportunity for re-affirming relationships, with fewer constraints operating. Thus, home leave should be encouraged with this in mind and limiting such leave should only occur where it is considered vital for the protection of society. It should not be used as a reward, but seen in terms of the long-term benefit to the individual and to society as a whole.

According to the regulations, home leave is available to all inmates who have served at least two months of their sentence and are in a minimum security institution; it is available once for inmates in a medium security institution as a pre-release measure in the last three months of their sentence but after having served at least two months; and, finally, it is available for all inmates who are participating in the release-to-work scheme. Leave must be applied for and approved. Once approved, and providing there is no special condition attached limiting further home leaves, leave is available on a regular basis (at eight or nine week intervals).

Table 14 gives the number of times an individual eligible for home leave applied for such leave, with the number of times leave was approved. A large number, representing 45.6% of the total eligible, had not applied for leave. Where applications were made, 45 individuals (40.5% of those applying) were refused on every application, giving a total of 138 (67.7%) who had not had a home leave approved at the time of the survey. Of those who had applied, the largest single proportion (48.7%) had applied only once, 46.3% being approved and 53.7% refused.

Table 14: Home Leave, Applications and Approvals

<u>Home Leave</u> <u>Applications</u>	<u>Home Leave Approvals</u>						<u>Total</u>
	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5+</u>	
0	93	-	-	-	-	-	93
1	29	25	-	-	-	-	54
2	9	12	7	-	-	-	28
3	4	2	1	2	-	-	9
4	1	1	2	0	2	-	6
5+	2	5	2	1	-	4	14
Total	45	45	12	3	2	4	111

It thus seems that much more use could be made of home leave. It is uncertain why so many have not applied (45.6%) despite being eligible according to the regulations. With a number of inmates being large distances from their home town or family they may not bother to apply because of the travelling costs involved. Some inmates may not have sponsors, or sponsors approved by the department. Although the regulations allow home leave from minimum security institutions after two months is served, this does not guarantee that leave will be granted. In particular those serving long sentences often have leave deferred or are discouraged from applying too soon. This factor should not affect many in this study because of the nature of the sample (male inmates had served at least half of their sentence). A change in the regulations subsequent to this survey gives superintendents the power to approve home leave for those serving three years or less in minimum or medium secure institutions within the above restrictions. It is not known how this has affected the numbers applying for and receiving home leave.

Home leave is an important aspect of maintaining relationships with family and/or friends. Consequently a more detailed study should be initiated to find out why inmates are not applying and also the reasons why leave is refused.

(c) Family Move

One aspect of imprisonment that has been mentioned at times is that some spouses or defactos move house to be closer to the inmate. How often this occurred was noted, but the reliability of the source of this information is uncertain. It was found that of 99 who had a spouse or defacto according to the official record ⁽⁸⁾, only one was noted as having moved residence for this purpose. Of the remainder, 27 had no need for a move (were in close proximity anyway), 69 did not move, and for two it was not known.

(8) The discrepancy between the number recorded here as having a spouse or defacto and the number recorded in earlier parts of the report is a result of the two different data sources and definitions. Here the source is official records, earlier it is as indicated by the inmate.

5: Summary and Discussion

The main concern of the present study related to the importance of inmate contact with family, friends and other acquaintances in the community and how it is affected by the location of penal institutions. This contact takes various forms, such as visiting, correspondence, and home leave, each having its own problems affecting how often such contact occurs.

The study showed that only about 30% of the sample were receiving visits from family or friends at least once a fortnight, but that this frequency does appear to be affected by the distance between home town and the institution. Those in institutions closer to their home town tended to receive visits more frequently than others. Over a fifth of the sample did not receive visits from family or friends at all. Inmates in the sample wanted visitors to visit more often and for more visitors to come.

A similar result was found in a study of Invercargill borstal trainees (Clearwater, 1980) which found that trainees whose home town was in the Southland district received a much higher frequency of visits than other trainees. The study indicated a high degree of isolation with almost 50% not receiving visits at all.

In the present study the major factors restricting or preventing visits related to transport problems (this exacerbated by the degree of isolation of the institution) and the fact that these visitors also had other commitments. Restrictions and conditions imposed by the institution or prison administration were indicated as a factor by 15.1% of the sample.

Correspondence was used more frequently by the sample as a form of communication than visiting, with considerably fewer inmates not receiving letters (21) as opposed to not receiving visits (116). This was also found in the Invercargill study where only one trainee (1%) had never received any letters, and where 86% received at least two to three letters a month.

Home leave, the third variable, showed that of those eligible for home leave, only 54.4% had applied for such leave. Of those who had applied, only 59.5% had at least one home leave approved.

When respondents were asked where they would like to spend their sentence and why, the majority selected the particular location so as to be closer to family and friends. In actual fact 66.8% of the sample (where home town was known) resided near a penal institution within reach by public transport. Of these though, only 25.3% were in that institution, the remainder being transferred away mainly for classification reasons.

6: Conclusion

This study indicates that inmates generally favour contact with family and friends through visits, but that these visits are inhibited in terms of occurrence and frequency by a number of factors.

Inmates accommodated closest to their home town received more frequent visits. The major factors indicated by inmates as preventing or inhibiting visits were related to transport problems of some sort or another, aggravated by the distance involved between the home town and the institution.

This situation is created by the general policy of both erecting institutions in isolated areas (e.g. Rangipo, Tongariro) or away from public transport systems, and the classification of institutions for specific purposes (e.g. medium, maximum, borstal). So although there appears to be a general proviso of retaining inmates as close to their home town as possible, the first restriction may mean that the closest is not within reach of public transport and the second often prevents them from being held in the closest institution anyway. Those from the Auckland area in particular are discriminated against in this manner as regards minimum security accommodation for males. Proposals arising from the penal policy review for regional prisons if finally adopted may avoid at least some of this problem in the Auckland region.

Whether any changes should be made to the present system to encourage visiting depends on the degree of intrinsic and extrinsic value accredited to maintaining relationships between the inmate and their family and friends, both in the short and long term. This would need to be balanced against the administrative convenience and the effect on other aspects of incarceration.

The only real long term solution, if it is considered that retaining the inmate as close to home as possible is an objective, is the establishment of smaller institutions within communities; there would be a consequent need for an increase in the number of institutions and these would be widely dispersed, making them more accessible to persons from the community. For maximum benefit there would also need to be some change in the classification procedure to overcome the need for inmates to be moved away from their home town for this reason. This development would have other beneficial repercussions in that the community could be utilised to a greater extent and take greater responsibility for members who have transgressed its laws.

A shorter term solution utilising present facilities would be to change the restrictive classification of institutions, or alternatively, change the classification procedure so that the majority of offenders could be contained in the nearest institution. These are the bases of the Regional Prison Model the Secretary for Justice proposed in his submission to the Penal Policy Review Committee, and which has resulted in specific recommendations from that Committee.

There will always be some criteria requiring segregation of certain prisoners, but this need not necessitate the use of separate institutions. Structural changes to existing institutions would enable several classification types to be accommodated in the same institution. This in fact occurs at present in a number of existing institutions.

In the very short term it is considered that a number of changes are possible at minimum cost and inconvenience. Visiting hours could be extended, particularly where they are restricted to several hours or one day a week only. This might do away with the frantic atmosphere generated at visiting times in these institutions, and give both the inmate and the visitor time to relax and become more comfortable with each other. In promoting this atmosphere, physical surroundings are a vital component, needing to be comfortable and conducive to communication. The physical conditions of visiting situations in a number of institutions leave a lot to be desired. One inmate in the sample felt concerned enough to point out aspects that would improve the visiting environment. These suggestions, presented in Appendix A, are quite comprehensive and deserve consideration.

It is recommended that changes possible in the short term be implemented but within the requirements imposed by the individual institutions, such as security. If it is considered that the benefits to the criminal justice system through maintaining relationships with family and friends substantiate further changes, then it is recommended that consideration be given to the longer-term planning previously referred to.

Supplementary to these recommendations is the need to encourage contact through other avenues, such as home leave, and make these more readily available to inmates. Such contact should be considered in view of its inherent value - as a means to prevent isolation and provide continuity and a point of reference for the inmate throughout his/her sentence and upon release. Because of the disappointingly low use of this provision, indicated in this study, it is recommended that a more detailed study be undertaken to find out why inmates are not applying and also the reasons why leave is refused.

Appendix A

VISITING: CONTRIBUTION FROM AN INMATE RESPONDENT

Visitors don't have to come. First-time visitors particularly may be wary about visiting a prison.

Anything to ease a visitor's apprehension is a good thing. May I offer these additional points for consideration?

- a. Officers' attitudes (selected men - and women to 'welcome' women).
- b. Environment, appearance externally, and internal decor (not so stark, forbidding, plain, functional, institutional - flowers, pictures?).
- c. Visitors to your home are offered a drink to put them at their ease. Surely the budget could cover an urn of tea a week.
- d. Space! Room to push your chair back without intruding on the group next door.
- e. Acoustic treatment of the (usually) concrete walls to reduce the noise of everyone talking at once.
- f. Light lunch at nominal cost for all-day visitors (to be booked on arrival).
- g. Volunteer church or welfare worker to assist with small children or distressed visitors. Creche or play area available (with strong toys made in prison workshop.)
- h. A minimum of formality (especially for frequent, known visitors) and that minimum with a smile.
- i. Semi-private facilities on prior request (with good reason) for possible difficult visits.

None of the above need cut across security. Many of the ideas could be provided by prison workshops, artists, gardens, etc.

None of the above will make a prison like 'home' - it can't be. But why should visitors see the worst and, sometimes, be treated like inmates?

Appendix BVISITING ARRANGEMENTS IN INSTITUTIONS (1)

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Special Room for Visitors</u>	<u>Number of Visitors(2)</u>	<u>Visiting Time</u>	<u>Other Comments</u>
Arohata (Prison)	No, use gymnasium	25+ children	Saturday pm only 2 hours	Generally no restrictions on numbers. More than 10% of visitors arrive outside visiting hours.
(CT)	No, use boardroom	4	Sundays pm only 2 hours	Make every effort for outside visits because much of the population is from outside Wellington.
Auckland	Yes	200 approx over whole period	Saturday am and pm 4 hours	No more than 3 visitors per inmate. Not many outside of visiting hours and by prior arrangement.
Christchurch (Men's)	No, use rec. hall	240 approx (total)	Saturday am and pm 4 hours	Limit of 3 visitors per inmate. No outdoor facilities. About 10% of visitors arrive outside visiting hours, usually pre-arranged.
Christchurch (Women's)	Yes	30 (approx)	Saturday am and pm 4 hours	Limit of 3 visitors per inmate. Many visitors arrive outside visiting hours, especially during holiday periods. Intended in future to have minimum security visits in a separate area and have access to outdoor visiting facilities.
Dunedin	No, use part of main corridor sealed off	50	Saturday pm 2 hours	Limit of 3 visitors per inmate. Only the occasional visitor arrives outside visiting hours

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Special Room for Visitors</u>	<u>Number of Visitors</u>	<u>Visiting Time</u>	<u>Other Comments</u>
Invercargill	Yes	60	Sunday pm 1 1/4 hours	Limit of 2 visitors per trainee. No outdoor facilities. Few arrive outside of visiting hours. Special visits on applicaton.
Mt Eden (Men's)	No, use rec. hall	100 approx	Saturday am & pm 5 hours	Average 2 visitors per inmate. No outdoor facilities. Very few arrive outside visiting hours. Problems occur with large families with young children, who become bored and uncontrollable, creating tension amongst other inmates/visitors.
Mt Eden (Women's)	Yes	10-30	Saturday am & pm 4 1/2 hours	Visits limited to 30 minutes. Few arrive outside visiting hours. Size of room and number of visitors make adequate supervision difficult.
Manawatu	Yes	30-50 (total)	Saturday Sunday am & pm 3 3/4 hours	Have visiting yard also. Not many visitors outside of visiting hours.
Napier	No, use rec. hall	20-40	Saturday am & pm	Limit of 3 visitors per inmate. Can sit outside. About 5% arrive outside of visiting hours.
New Plymouth	Yes	50 approx (depends on no. of local inmates)	Sunday am and pm 4 3/4 hours	Limit of 3 visitors per inmate. Number of visitors often flow into passageway. No outdoor facilities. Visiting room too small for good visiting and supervision. Quite a number arrive outside of visiting hours. Given short visit if travelled some distance, otherwise all day or 1/2 day by prior arrangement.

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Special Room for Visitors</u>	<u>Number of Visitors</u>	<u>Visiting Time</u>	<u>Other Comments</u>
Ohura	Yes	15-20	Saturday Sunday am & pm 7 hrs per day	Very small visiting room would accommodate 20, have large grassed area and veranda that is more commonly used. About 10% visit outside visiting hours. Owing to isolation of institution and difficulties with public transport, the ratio of visitors to inmates is low. It is not unusual for an inmate serving 6 months or less to do his entire sentence without receiving a visit.
Rangipo	Yes	5-20	Saturday Sunday 9am-4pm	Outdoor area also. Very few visits outside of visiting hours; by prior arrangement.
Rolleston (prison)	No, use rec hall	50	Saturday am & pm 6 hours	Occasional limits placed on number of visitors at times due to lack of space and chairs. Provision for outside visiting. About 5% arrive outside visiting hours.
Rolleston D.C. (now CT)	No, use recreation-dining room	20-40	Sunday pm only 2 hours	All visits limited to immediate family and girlfriend accompanied by parents. No outdoor facilities. Very few outside of visiting hours; by prior arrangement.

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Special Room for Visitors</u>	<u>Number of Visitors</u>	<u>Visiting Time</u>	<u>Other Comments</u>
Tongariro/Hautu	Yes	15-20 approx	Saturday Sunday 9am-4pm	No number restrictions except for gang members. Visitors can sit outside. Few visitors outside visiting hours.
Waikeria - (1)Hillary House	Yes	15-20	Saturday Sunday pm only 3 hours per day	Plenty of space, patio for certain family groups occasionally. Very few outside of visiting hours; by prior arrangement.
(2)Main Institution	Yes	90-100	Saturday Sunday pm only 3 hours per day	On few occasions time and number restrictions put on visitors due to lack of room. Outdoor area available for all but top security inmates. Very few outside visiting hours. Have few problems catering for visitors, one of the main reasons being that it is too difficult to get to because of lack of public transport.
(3)Meads House	Yes	10	Saturday Sunday, pm only 3 hours per day	Plenty of space. Small outdoor area also. Very few arrive outside visiting hours; generally by prior arrangement.

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Special Room for Visitors</u>	<u>Number of Visitors</u>	<u>Visiting Time</u>	<u>Other Comments</u>
Waikune	Yes	average 6 up to 20	Saturday Sunday 9am-4pm	Outside visiting area. About 5% arrive outside visiting hours.
Wanganui (1) Kaikohe	Yes	50	Saturday Sunday am & pm 5 hours per day	Limit of 3 visitors per inmate. No outdoor facilities. 10-15% arrive outside visiting hours.
(2) City	Yes	20-25 plus children	Saturday Sunday 9am-3pm	Outside area also. Few visitors received outside visiting hours.
Wellington	No, use rec. hall	approx 150+ (total)	Saturday am and pm	No outdoor facilities. Visitors received outside visiting hours every day.
Wi Tako	Yes	70 (total)	Saturday Sunday am and pm 4 hours per day	Generally no restriction on number of visitors. In times of overcrowding limited to 3 visitors per inmate. Outdoor area also. Few visitors received outside visiting hours.

(1) As at December 1979 and updated to October 1981. Very few changes had been made in the individual institutions during this period.

(2) Refers to number of visitors at any one time.

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