



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Justice**

Response to the review:

Contact with family and friends while in custody

November 2018

The Department of Justice welcomes the review into Contact with family and friends while in custody and acknowledges the review key findings;

- Telephones use is high but access is not equal.
- Competition for phones increases risk.
- Overcrowding and inefficient processes are making it more difficult for prisoners to receive visits.
- Population pressures are restricting placement options.
- The Department is mitigating the barriers faced by visitors but more can be done.

The Department has reviewed the report and noted a level of acceptance against the five recommendations.

Appendix A contains a comment for your attention and consideration.

Response to Recommendations

1 Consider the use of wireless technology where adding land lines is cost prohibitive.

Response:

The Department acknowledges that with emerging technology and increasing population demands, there are benefits from exploring other technologies to maintain social support.

The Department is investigating alternatives to landlines as part of its transition to GovNext ICT services. GovNext vendors will be engaged to identify a fit for purpose prisoner telephony solution in Q1 2019. This solution may or may not include wireless technology.

Responsible Business Area: Corporate Services
Proposed Completion Date: 31 December 2019
Level of Acceptance: Supported in Principle

2 Increase the remand allowance to reflect the increased costs associated with calling mobile phones.

Response:

With the introduction of the new PTS call service provider the Department intends to introduce a flat fee per call for all calls across the network irrespective of call type whilst the current charging regime exists (stage 1). Once the GovNext solution is introduced then a review of the pricing will be required (Stage 2) and a new pricing model implemented.

Responsible Business Area: Corporate Services
Proposed Completion Date: 31 December 2019
Level of Acceptance: Noted

3 Review and update the remote allowance to reflect actual STD and international call costs.

Response:

The Department maintains that it is important for prisoners to maintain contact with their family, friends and community. It is acknowledged that the requirement (as set out in Policy Directive 36) to provide remote prisoners with two free 10-minute calls per week, is not being met consistently across the State.

The Department's Operating Standards & Procedures Branch will monitor compliance of the remote phone allowance while conducting prison compliance reviews. Findings will be provided for consideration and action.

A reminder will be provided to all prisons that Policy Directive 36 requires eligible remote/out of country prisoners to be provided with an allowance sufficient to cover two 10-minute calls to their family/friends, and not a set amount decided locally.

Responsible Business Area: Adult Justice Services
Proposed Completion Date: 30 June 2019
Level of Acceptance: Supported

4 Provide daily visits at Roebourne Regional Prison to meet legislative requirements for remand prisoners.

Response:

The Department acknowledges that Roebourne Regional Prison has experienced issues in being able to meet the legislative requirements. Strategies will be developed in order to resolve the issues.

Responsible Business Area: Roebourne Regional Prison
Proposed Completion Date: 30 June 2019
Level of Acceptance: Supported

5 Implement an online booking system for social visits in all prisons.

Response:

The Department acknowledges that population pressures has resulted in deficiencies in being able to meet the demands of visits, specifically at the prisons with a large number of remandees. An online booking system would greatly assist to reduce the issue of visitors unable to contact the prisons due to wait times.

The Department is piloting interim solutions to address the volume of calls related to booking prison visits. This includes implementation of an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) queuing system at Hakea Prison on 16 October 2018 with plans to pilot SMS confirmations of visitor bookings and booking visits via an online interface by December 2018. Once the pilot is evaluated, fit for purpose solutions will be extended across all prisons in 2019. For the longer term, a solution that is fully integrated with TOMS is being explored.

Responsible Business Area: Knowledge Information and Technology
Proposed Completion Date: 31 December 2019
Level of Acceptance: Supported

Attachment: Inaccuracies and Comments

OICS Reference	OICS Information	Comments
Page 8	Urgent legal matter where the prisoner has insufficient funds to contact a legal practitioner.	On 5 July 2018, the Department issued Prison Order 02/2018 which states telephone calls to legal practitioners shall be made in accordance with the requirements of Policy Directive 36 and shall not be at the cost of the prisoner.