



AUDIT SERVICE SIERRA LEONE

**FOLLOW-UP PERFORMANCE AUDIT
ON THE WELFARE OF INMATES**

NOVEMBER, 2025

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 Background.....	6
1.2 Audit Objective	6
1.3 Scope	6
1.4 Sample Selection	7
1.5 Audit Approach.....	7
1.6 Methods of Data Collection	8
2 FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS	10
2.1 CUSTODY OF INMATES.....	10
2.1.1 Examination of Inmates on Admission and before Discharge	10
2.1.2 Separation of Inmates in Cells.....	11
2.1.3 Insane Inmates within the Centres.....	13
2.1.4 Provision of Medical Supplies for Sick Inmates.....	14
2.2 FACILITIES PROVIDED FOR INMATES	16
2.2.2. Accommodation	16
2.2.2 Uniforms for Inmates	19
2.2.4 Toilet Facilities	22
2.2.5 Water Facilities.....	24
2.2.6 Food for Inmates	25
2.2.7 Kitchen Facilities.....	27
2.2.8 Recreational Facilities for Inmates.....	28
2.3 REFORMATION, REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION	30
2.3.1 Earning Scheme for Inmates	32
2.4 OTHER OBSERVATIONS.....	34
2.4.1 Female Inmates with Children.....	34
CONCLUSION.....	36
APPENDICES.....	37

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sierra Leone Correctional Service (SLCS) exists as part of an integrated justice system to protect society by keeping inmates in secured and humane conditions, whilst encouraging and actively assisting them in their rehabilitation and reintegration by a professional workforce. The Service contributes to the reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of both remanded and convicted persons.

The welfare of inmates includes the provision of essential services for their improved well-being, to live in humane conditions and to ensure that their rights are kept and maintained. The SLCS as part of the criminal justice system and respect for the rule of law, contributes to the protection of society by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens, while exercising reasonable safe, secured and humane control.

In December 2021, the Audit Service Sierra Leone (ASSL) conducted a nationwide performance audit on the welfare of inmates. The objective was to establish how efficient and effective the systems were in addressing the welfare of inmates. That audit highlighted significant weaknesses in the areas of admission, accommodation, food, bed and beddings, medical, rehabilitation and reformation programmes, recreational facilities, and the earning scheme. The audit team also proffered recommendations to be implemented by the SLCS.

It is against this background and in line with ISSAI 3000 (147), which requires the audit team to follow up on previous audit findings and recommendations, that a follow-up audit on the welfare of inmates was undertaken. The main objective of the audit was to assess the extent to which the recommendations made in the previous performance audit report have been implemented. The audit also highlighted areas that need improvement, and made recommendations that could help improve the welfare of inmates. The following is a summary of the key findings and conclusions arising from the follow-up audit.

Status of Follow-up on Recommendations

The audit team analysed the findings based on evidence and verification of responses from the SLCS. The status of the follow-up on audit recommendations has been categorised as fully implemented, partially implemented and not implemented. Table 1 shows that out of 23 audit recommendations, six (representing 26%) have been fully implemented, 11 (representing 48%) have been partially implemented, and six (representing 26%) have not been implemented.

Table 1: Status of Follow-up on Audit Recommendations

Area of Audit	Number of Recommendation	Extent of Implementation		
		Fully implemented	Partially implemented	Not implemented
Custody of Inmates				
Examination of Inmates on Admission and before Discharge	1	0	1	0
Separation of Inmate Cells	1	0	0	1
Insane Inmates within the Centres	2	1	0	1
Provision of Medical Supplies for Sick Inmates	3	2	0	1
Facilities Provided for Inmates				
Accommodation	4	1	3	0
Uniform for Inmates	1	0	1	0
Bed and Beddings	1	0	0	1
Toilet Facilities	1	0	1	0
Water Facilities	2	2	0	0
Food	1	0	0	1
Kitchen Facilities	2	0	1	1
Recreational Facilities	1	0	1	0
Reformation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration				
Training Equipment & Capacity Building	2	0	2	0
Earning Scheme for Inmates	1	0	1	0
Total	23	6	11	6
Percentage (%)	100	26	48	26

Overall Conclusion

A follow-up audit is conducted to communicate the progress and outcomes of the actions taken in response to recommendations made in the previous audit report tabled in Parliament. This involves providing a clear and concise summary of the implementation status of each recommendation. This is normally done with the view of reporting back to Parliament the extent to which the recommendations have been implemented.

This follow-up audit brings out the recommendations that have been implemented, those partially implemented and those not implemented, which are critical for improving the performance of the SLCS. The auditors acknowledge the concerted efforts made by the SLCS and the Judiciary in the construction of additional cell blocks and the establishment of the prisons court in headquarter towns and the judicial week to decongest the centres. The audit team reviewed the list of judgments passed during the special judicial court sessions held at the correctional facilities on convicted inmates, and commended the SLCS on this stride. The team further stated that this has helped in decongesting these facilities.

The audit team also acknowledged the support towards rehabilitation and reintegration, and provision of water facilities by the GoSL and development partners in addressing the audit recommendations.

However, there is need for improvement in the facilities provided to inmates in the areas of bedding, beds, uniforms and toilets at these correctional centres, as the cells are still overcrowded. With concern, we observed that there were infants in the cells with their mothers, and support is being provided by humanitarian organisations.

Overall Recommendations

The Director General (DG) of the SLCS should ensure the following:

- Work with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Law Officers Department to prioritise the approval of the Bail and Sentence Guidelines as this will help in decongesting the cells.
- Liaise with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Childen's Affairs and the development partners to follow-up on lactating mothers in the cells.
- Liaise with other stakeholders and development partners to ensure the implementation of all the recommendations which have either been partially implemented or not implemented.
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Health regarding inmates with suspected mental illness to confirm their mental status and ensure they are transferred to centres where they can be adequately catered for.
- Liaise with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the required resources are made available to effectively manage the centres.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Performance audit seeks to improve the accountability and performance of government organisations. It provides an objective and constructive assessment of the extent to which the audited body has utilised its resources in carrying out its responsibilities with due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Section 11 (2c) of the Audit Service Act of 2014 mandates the Audit Service to carry out value-for-money and other audits, to ensure that efficiency and effectiveness are achieved in the use of public funds.

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) like all other governments around the world has the responsibility to protect and promote human rights for all, without discrimination. The United Nations (UN) and other human rights organisations have set minimum standards and guidelines that should be followed in the realisation of this responsibility. Persons that are imprisoned cannot cater for their own basic needs, so it is incumbent on the State, to provide these basic needs for them.

In December 2021, the Audit Service Sierra Leone issued a Performance Audit Report on the Welfare of Inmates. The objective was to establish how efficient and effective the systems were in addressing the welfare of inmates, in line with the Sierra Leone Prisons' Rules, the SLCS Act 2014, and the International Human Rights Standards for Inmates (considering their admission, accommodation, food, bed and beddings, medical, rehabilitation and reformation programmes, recreational facilities, and earning scheme).

Against this background, the Audit Service Sierra Leone decided to follow-up on previous audit findings and recommendations made to the SLCS. The follow-up audit assesses the extent to which these findings and recommendations have been implemented, and the impact of the corrective actions taken by the SLCS to improve the welfare of inmates. The follow-up audit also provides Parliament and the public with timely information on actions taken by the SLCS in implementing the recommendations made from the findings of the previous performance audit.

1.2 Audit Objective

The objective of this follow-up performance audit was to assess the extent to which the recommendations have been implemented by the SLCS.

1.3 Scope

The audit client is the SLCS, covering its headquarters, Mafanta, Freetown, Bo, and Makeni Male and Female Correctional Centres. The follow-up audit is limited to the recommendations in the previous performance audit report done in 2021, their updated responses and implementation status. It also considered the manner in which the SLCS collaborated with the Ministry of Social Welfare on issues

concerning lactating mothers in the centres, and the recent development made by the SLCS in improving the welfare of inmates.

Specifically the audit focused on:

- (i) Custody of Inmates
- (ii) Facilities Provided for Inmates
- (iii) Recreational Facilities
- (iv) Rehabilitation and Reformation of Inmates

1.4 Sample Selection

The team carefully selected four districts: Bo, Bombali (Makeni), Tonkolili (Mafanta) and Western Area, for the follow-up audit. These districts were selected based on the gravity of the issues raised in the previous report, and the SLCS's response to the implementation of the recommendations proffered. Table 2 shows the specific facilities visited during the follow-up audit.

Table 2: Facilities visited during the follow-up audit

District	Correctional Centre
Bo	Bo Male Correctional Centre Bo Female Correctional Centre
Bombali	Makeni Male Correctional Centre Makeni Female Correctional Centre
Tonkolili	Mafanta Correctional Centre
Western Area Rural	Pre-trial Detention Correctional Centre
Western Area Urban	Freetown Male Correctional Centre Freetown Female Correctional Centre Reintegration Male Correctional Centre

1.5 Audit Approach

The audit was conducted in line with ISSAI 300/139 which states: “The auditor shall focus the follow-up on whether the audited entity has adequately addressed the problems and remedied the underlying situation after a reasonable period.” The standard requires that the follow-up be planned and performed in a manner that enables auditors to obtain sufficient and appropriate evidence to serve as the basis for reporting the outcome of the recommendations issued, and provide feedback to SAIs. The results of follow-up are reported appropriately in order to provide feedback to Parliament on the level of implementation for corrective actions to be taken where relevant. The report was written in line with the IDI Performance Audit ISSAI Implementation Handbook, 2021. The result-oriented approach was used to conduct the audit. This approach assessed whether the recommendations were implemented and the impact was created.

1.6 Methods of Data Collection

Document Reviews

The team reviewed documents on the progress made in the implementation of recommendations. These documents included medical admission forms, standing orders, contract documents and others, as stated in **Appendix 1**.

Interviews

Personnel of the SLCS were interviewed to clarify issues concerning the implementation of recommendations of the previous audit and assess the challenges encountered. Personnel of the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs were interviewed to know the role they played regarding lactating mothers in detention together with their children. The team also engaged the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to understand their roles in ensuring speedy discharge of minor cases. See **Appendix 2** for details.

Observations

Physical observations and inspections were conducted in the correctional facilities visited in Freetown, Bo, Mafanta and Makeni as stated in **Appendix 3**. This was to ascertain the progress made so far in the welfare of inmates after the previous audit.

Criteria for Assessing the Level of Implementation of Recommendations

The follow-up audit examined the recommendations or significant observations made in the previous performance audit. The previous recommendations or observations served as the follow-up criteria.

Status of Implementation of Recommendations and Factors Considered when Ranking the Implementation

The implementation of the recommendations was measured using the status of the recommendations as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Status of Implementation of Recommendations

Status of Implementation	Meaning
Fully implemented	When the audited entity provides sufficient and appropriate evidence to support all elements of the recommendation.
Partially implemented	When the audited entity provides some evidence which supports the implementation, but not all elements of the recommendation are addressed.

Not implemented	When the audited entity provides evidence which does not support meaningful movement towards implementation of a recommendation, or no evidence is provided.
-----------------	--

2 FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the previous audit recommendations based on the findings, and the level of implementation of the recommendations.

2.1 CUSTODY OF INMATES

2.1.1 Examination of Inmates on Admission and before Discharge

Recommendation

The Director General (DG) should ensure that the medical officers-in-charge strictly adhere to the Correctional Service Act, 2014 and Rule 42 of the Prisons Rules, by examining inmates upon admission and discharge in order to reduce the risk of sick inmates infecting healthy ones.

Responses in 2024

There are Admission and Discharge Boards constituted at every correctional centre across the country with the Medical Officer at each correctional centre being part of the Boards. All inmates are medically examined upon admission and discharge, and such records are kept at all correctional centres, which will be available for verification.

Additionally, regional health officers in all regions have been strongly admonished by the Medical Superintendent to take their work seriously in this regard. Further, the Director General has ensured that the issue of medical examination of inmates upon admission and discharge is clearly spelt out in the draft SLCS Standing Orders, in line with the provision of section 37 of the SLCS Act, 2014. Copies of the pages of the draft Standing Orders containing directives on medical examination of inmates will be available for verification.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

A review of the minutes of meetings of the Medical Boards at the Makeni and Bo Male Correctional Centres revealed the reports on admission, hospitalisation, treated cases and referrals. We observed that the nurses and officers-in-charge examined the inmates upon admission. While the audit team confirmed that the Admission Boards were functional at the Makeni and Bo Correctional Centres, none were sighted at the Mafanta and the Freetown Correctional Centres.

Interviews with the Officers-in-Charge (OCs) revealed that the list of inmates to be discharged are prepared on a monthly basis, and submitted to the Board for approval. Upon discharge, transportation fare is provided for inmates that stay out of the region, contrary to section 37 of the SLCS Act 2014, which requires that upon admission to and immediately before discharge from a correctional centre, the Medical Officer shall examine every inmate.

The audit team reviewed the preliminary medical examination, admission and discharge forms used at various correctional centres, and found out that these forms were not maintained in a chronological manner. It was therefore difficult for the audit team to ascertain whether medical examinations were done on inmates before discharge.

The non-adherence to the examination of inmates upon discharge may be attributed to weak monitoring and supervision by the Medical OC. This could lead to the discharge of inmates with contagious diseases.

Recommendation

The Director General (DG) should ensure that the OC of the centres strictly adhere to the Correctional Service Act, 2014 and the Standing Orders, by examining inmates upon admission and discharge, in order to reduce the risk of sick inmates infecting others.

Management's Response

Management acknowledge the findings of the auditors. There are existing admission and discharge Boards in every correctional Centre across the country, with the medical officer attached at each Correctional Centre as they form part of the Board. However, management will make sure that the Medical Officer attached to each correctional centre provide the relevant documents to justify the medical condition of inmates upon discharge in sequence reports as enshrined in the Correctional Service Act.

Auditor's Comment

Copies of admission Board summary reports from Kenema dated 1st May 2025, and the discharge Board report from Sefadu Correctional Centre dated 4th May 2025 were submitted to the auditors for verification. However, the discharge report presented did not indicate whether the inmates were examined before discharge. The issue has been partially addressed.

2.1.2 Separation of Inmates in Cells

Recommendation

The OC should ensure that inmates are categorised according to their crimes in line with international standards. This will help in terms of safety and security, rehabilitation and social reintegration opportunities for inmates, and the planning and prioritisation of staffing levels, bed spacing and programming.

Responses in 2024

Successful segregation of inmates at our correctional facilities continues to be a challenge due to overcrowding at these facilities. With support from the Government of Sierra Leone, the SLCS continues to make frantic efforts to expand the existing correctional facilities and build new ones to ease the overcrowding challenge, and pave the way for proper segregation of inmates. Work in this regard is near completion at the Waterloo and Moyamba Correctional Centres.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

During the course of the audit, we observed that, with the exception of condemned prisoners, the non-separation of inmates according to their crimes still remains a challenge at all correctional centres visited. This was confirmed during interviews with the officers in charge of the various centres who explained that, this was due to inadequate cells and security threats. This is contrary to international standards for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman Treatment or Punishment, which state that: “The different categories of prisoners shall be kept in separate institutions or parts of institutions taking account of their sex, age, criminal record, the legal reason for their detention, and the necessities of their treatment¹”. However, at the Pademba Road and Male Reintegration Correctional Centres, condemned and politically exposed inmates were separated from the other inmates due to the risk associated with their cases/crimes.

Recommendation

The DG and the OC should ensure that inmates are categorised according to their crimes in line with international standards. This will help in terms of safety and security, rehabilitation and social reintegration opportunities for inmates, and for better planning and prioritisation of staffing levels, bed spacing and programming.

Management’s Response

Management agrees with the auditor's comments with regards the categorization of inmates according to their crimes in line with international standards. However, successful segregation of inmates in our correctional facilities remains to be a challenge due to overcrowding and inadequate space. Furthermore, SLCS continues to engage government to improve on existing correctional facilities and build new ones to curb the overcrowding challenge that will lead to successful segregation and categorisation of inmates.

Auditor’s Comment:

We have taken note of the response from management. The audit team physically verified the ongoing construction of additional cells (nine cells for male and 5 for female) at the Waterloo Correctional Center. However, the non-separation of inmates according to their crimes still remains a challenge at the correctional centres. The issue therefore remains unresolved.

¹ The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) 1990’s basic “rule of thumb”

2.1.3 Insane Inmates within the Centres

Recommendation

The Director General should facilitate the acquisition of drugs for insane inmates, and enhance weekly and monthly check-ups in order to safeguard the lives of sane inmates.

Responses in 2024

The SLCS does not have its own psychiatrist, therefore, suspected mentally ill inmates are often referred to the appropriate professional, of which there is only one practicing psychiatrist in the entire country. While dealing with mentally ill inmates at the correctional facilities in the provinces remain a challenge, we often endeavour to refer them to the professionals in Freetown. In addition, the SLCS is in the process of recruiting and retaining its own psychiatrists to attend to inmates with suspected mental conditions.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

During our visits to the various provincial correctional centres (Bo, Makeni and Mafanta), we observed that the centres did not have insane inmates. Interviews with the OC revealed that insane inmates were transferred to the mental hospital in Freetown for treatment. The team however noted that insane inmates were held at the Freetown Male Correctional Centre.

Interview with the OC at the Freetown Male Correctional Centre disclosed that insane inmates were still held at the Centre because there was no formal report from the mental hospital declaring them insane. This is in contravention of Rule 22 of the United Nations Minimum Standard, which requires that: “At every institution, there shall be the services of at least one qualified Medical Officer who should have some knowledge of psychiatry; a psychiatric service for the diagnosis and, in proper cases, the treatment of states of mental abnormality.”

This requirement is also supported in section 4 of the Prisons Act, 2014 which states: “Where a Medical Officer is of the view that an inmate is in need of specialist treatment, including psychiatric care, the Medical Officer shall make a report to the Officer-in-Charge, and shall arrange for the inmate to be referred to an appropriate medical practitioner.”

The National Medical Supervisor of the SLCS confirmed in his interview that medical arrangements are made with the Kissy Psychiatric Hospital for the admission or treatment of insane inmates since the SLCS does not have trained and qualified medical officers to handle such cases.

From the review of prescription and treatment records, we observed that these records were not properly managed by the medical personnel at the Pademba Road Correctional Centre. For instance, diagnosis, prescriptions and date of next visitation were not seen in inmates files. The non-isolation of insane inmates within the prison yard and cells can endanger the lives of other sane inmates.

Recommendation

The DG should ensure that at least one qualified Psychiatric Medical Officer is recruited for the Centre, to diagnose sick inmates. In addition, the DG should enhance the practice of weekly and monthly check-ups and continue to facilitate the acquisition of drugs in order to safeguard the lives of inmates.

Management's Response

Management is grateful for the auditors finding. It is true that the SLCS does not have its own professional psychiatrist. Therefore, suspected mental illness cases are often referred to the appropriate professionals of which there is only one practicing psychiatrist in the whole country. As a result, dealing with suspected mental cases at our correctional facilities especially in the provinces remain a big challenge.

Auditor's Comment:

We were able to verify that drugs were supplied to the SLCS for insane inmates. We however, encourage the SLCS to liaise with the relevant authorities including the development partners for the recruitment of professionals such as psychologists and psychiatrists. The SLCS should also adopt the practice of regular check-ups in order to safeguard the lives of inmates. Therefore, the issue relating to the supply of drugs has been resolved, while the recruitment of a qualified Psychiatric Medical Officer (including weekly and monthly check-ups) remains unresolved.

2.1.4 Provision of Medical Supplies for Sick Inmates

Recommendation

The Director General should prioritise the provision of basic medical equipment, separation of sick inmates and routine monitoring of centres for the availability of essential drugs.

Responses in 2024

The SLCS has standing contracts for the supply of clinical drugs and provision of medical services to inmates across the country. The institution sometimes faces challenge with the supply of drugs due to suppliers' refusal to supply, or holding on to supplies due to lack of payment by the Ministry of Finance. We have however had engagement with the suppliers to ensure drugs are maintained on the counters at the infirmaries of correctional facilities.

With regards the issues around the combination of drugs, the Medical Superintendent has expressed his professional opinion that such is a normal practice in the medical field; that different drugs could be combined to treat an inmate diagnosed with multiple illnesses. The rule of thumb is always that the Medical Officer must instruct nurses to administer all drugs upon prescription. Before now, the SLCS was challenged with transportation of inmates. The SLCS has now procured ambulances that have been distributed to all regions.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

The audit team observed that the SLCS has made strides to ensure: (i) the availability of adequate drugs at the centres visited; and (ii) the availability of basic medical equipment such as scale, thermometer, BP machine, sugar machine, and testers within the medical facilities at the correctional centres. For instance, the Mafanta Correctional Centre has made improvement in their medical facilities with four beds in the medical room, and treatment is administered based on complaints and prescriptions. However, the team observed that sick inmates have still not been separated from other inmates.

Recommendation

The DG should continue to sustain the availability of adequate drugs and basic medical equipment at the centres. In addition, provision should be made for sick inmates to be separated to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

Auditor's Comment:

We were able to verify that drugs and basic medical equipment were available in the centres that we visited. However, the management has still not been able to separate sick inmates from other inmates. Therefore, the issues relating to the supply of drugs and basic medical equipment have been resolved, while the separation of sick inmates remains unresolved.

2.2 FACILITIES PROVIDED FOR INMATES

2.2.2. Accommodation

Recommendation

The Director General should ensure the following:

- Constantly monitor the OC reception on the outcome of the jail delivery.
- Follow-up on cases with the Judiciary, especially for inmates with minor offences so that those issues are dealt with without the confinement of culprits.
- Engage the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the initiation of a law for minor offences as a means of reducing overcrowding in the correctional centres.
- Establish conducive environments for the incarceration of inmates as enshrined in the UN Minimum Standard Rules.

Responses in 2024

Overcrowding remains a serious challenge at correctional facilities across the country. The SLCS is however constructing additional facilities at Waterloo, Karene, Falaba and Moyamba where inmates shall be transferred upon completion, so that we would be able to decongest the existing centres.

The SLCS has made series of follow-ups on all cases with the Judiciary, especially for inmates with minor offences. Now, an established judicial court holds at the correctional facilities, which releases inmates with fines and minor offences. This year for instance, through a judicial court sitting, 659 inmates were released from correctional centres nationwide.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

Waterloo Correctional Facility

The SLCS in their response disclosed that there are ongoing construction of additional facilities at Waterloo, Karene, Falaba and Moyamba, and the establishment of the judicial court in order to address the issue of overcrowding in the various centers across the country. The audit team physically verified the ongoing construction of additional cells (nine cells for male and 5 for female) at the Waterloo Correctional Center. These cells are being constructed to accommodate at most 50 inmates. The current Female Correctional Centre at Waterloo is very small for the number of inmates it holds (8*10ft with over 10 inmates). The male facility has four cells constructed for at least 30 inmates, but currently accommodate over 89 inmates. We also observed cracks in the completed administrative building at Waterloo Predetention Centre.

Makeni Male Correctional Centre

Rule 10 of the UN Minimum Standard requires that: “All accommodation provided for the use of prisoners, and in particular, all sleeping accommodation shall meet all requirements of health, due regard being paid to climatic conditions and particularly to cubic content of air, minimum floor space,

lighting, heating and ventilation”. The accommodation at the Makeni Male Correctional Centre still remains the same (small) and with a low ceiling, thus producing severe heat during the dry season. Interviews conducted with the OC revealed that this causes sleepless nights for inmates and as such, lock-up times are extended to 6pm instead of 4:30pm as stipulated in the SLCS Standing Order.

Freetown and Bo Male Correctional Centres

The Freetown Male and Bo Correctional Centres are too small to accommodate the number of inmates currently in the centres. The facilities are not airy enough or well ventilated, and lack minimum floor space when one considers the varying number of inmates in each cell. This was highlighted during the previous audit; that the centres were very small and not conducive for the safekeeping of inmates.

Mafanta Reintegration Centre

At the Mafanta Reintegration Centre, the accommodation condition is better when compared to the size of the cells and the number of inmates. Table 4 shows an increase in the number of inmates in various centres at the date of the follow-up when compared to the previous audit undertaken in 2021.

Table 4: Number of Inmates at the Date of the Follow-up

Correctional Centre	2021 Audit Actual No. of Inmates Sleeping in the Centre	Follow-up Audit Actual No. of Inmates Sleeping in the Centre	Increase	Total No. of Cells
Pademba Road	1600	1872	272	321
Female Correctional Centre	85	98	13	18
Reintegration	109	220	111	8
Mafanta	475	710	235	18
Makeni – Male	220	354	134	5
Makeni– Female	7	22	15	4

The team observed that inmates with minor cases (traffic, loitering, public insult) were still sent to correctional facilities, resulting to overcrowding as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Number of Inmates with Minor Cases in Various Correctional Centres

Correctional Centres	Number Inmates
Freetown Male Correctional Centre	377
Makeni Correctional Centre	27
Bo Correctional Centre	2
Pre-trial Detention Waterloo Correctional Centre	12

Even though the SLCS did not provide any written evidence on follow-ups on cases with the Judiciary, especially for inmates with minor offences, interviews with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Senior Officers of the SLCS revealed that judicial courts has been established at correctional facilities and Prison Courts at district headquarter towns. These are mechanisms put in place to decongest the centres. They further explained that, for the judicial court, cases tried by the Magistrate are reviewed three times a year and for the prison court, cases are reviewed three to six times a year depending on support from the GoSL, the UNDP and other development partners. Progress has been made towards the enactment of the Criminal Procedures Act and the Bail and Sentence guidelines. They also confirmed that the Minister of Internal Affairs had been engaging the Law Officers' Department to address minor offences.

Recommendation

The DG should:

- Continue to engage the Law Officers' Department for the enactment of the Criminal Procedures Act and the Bail and Sentence guidelines as these will help in conviction and discharge.
- Follow-up on cases with the Judiciary, especially for inmates with minor offences so that those issues are dealt with without the confinement of culprits.
- Engage the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the initiation of a law for minor offences as a means of reducing overcrowding in the correctional centres.
- Establish conducive environments for the incarceration of inmates as enshrined in the UN Minimum Standard Rule.

Management's Response

Overcrowding in our correctional centres remains a serious challenge across the country. The SLCS is however constructing additional facilities at Waterloo, Karene, Falaba and Moyamba where inmates shall be transferred upon completion to decongest the existing centres. The management of the SLCS has made series of follow ups on all cases with the judiciary especially for inmates with minor offences. Currently, an established judicial court holds at the correctional facilities to review these minor offences and release inmates with fines. This will further helps to decongest our centres.

Auditor's Comment:

We were able to verify that:

- **Progress** has been made towards the enactment of the Criminal Procedures Act and the Bail and Sentence guidelines. This issue has been partially resolved.

- Additional cells (nine cells for male and 5 for female) are currently being constructed at the Waterloo Correctional Center. Until this project and the other construction projects across the country are completed, this issue is considered partially resolved.
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs has been engaging the SLCS on the initiation of a law for minor offences as a means of reducing overcrowding in the correctional centres. However, the law has not been enacted. The issue is therefore considered partially resolved.
- The judicial courts at the correctional facilities and prison courts at the district headquarter towns have been established. We further reviewed the January 2025 districts analysis breakdown of discharge inmates, which revealed the discharge of inmates by circuit courts, as effort to decongest the centres. We consider the efforts made by the SLCS satisfactory and encourage them to continue to work with the Judiciary in the future..

2.2.2 Uniforms for Inmates

Recommendation

The Director General should ensure regular supplies of uniforms not only for the health/welfare of the inmates, but also for ease of identification. The United Nations Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners requires every inmate to be given uniform.

Responses in 2024

The SLCS has entered into a contract for the supply of uniforms to all inmates. The implementation of the contract is in progress and the SLCS awaits the delivery of the first consignment of uniforms for inmates.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

With the exception of the Freetown and Makeni Female Correctional Centres, the uniform situation still remains the same in the other correctional centres visited. Inmates in centres visited either wore torn uniforms, normal clothing or were bare-skinned as shown in Figure 1. Interviews conducted with OCs of the correctional centres revealed that uniforms had not been supplied for the past two years due to failure to make the 30% advanced payment to the supplier, as stated in the contract.

The lack of uniforms for inmates could prevent the prison authorities from identifying them, creating room for them to escape from the prison premises unnoticed.

Figure 1: Photo showing Inmates without uniforms at the Bo and Waterloo Male Correctional Centres



Photo: Credit ASSL. Photo taken on 21st and 24th October, 2024

Figure 2: Photo showing Female Inmates with Torn Uniforms at the Bo Female Correctional Centre



Photo: Credit ASSL. Photo taken on the 22nd October, 2024

Recommendation

The DG should liaise with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that adequate resources are allocated to manage the centres. In addition, priority should be given to the supply of uniforms not only for the health/welfare of the inmates, but also for ease of identification.

Management's Response

The SLCS has entered into a contract for the supply of uniforms for all inmates of our correctional centres across the country. The implementation of the contract was done and we have received part of the supply in 2024 for our inmates and still waiting for the next supply. See distribution list for verification.

Auditor's Comment:

We have taken note of the management response. The team reviewed the distribution list submitted for audit verification and noted that 1000 pairs of uniforms were distributed to the various correctional centres. We however observed that the female corrections centres in Bo and Makeni were not supplied. Therefore the issue has been partially resolved.

2.2.3 Bed and Bedding**Recommendation**

The DG should ensure that adequate supply of bedding are made available to centres based on the number of inmates. The mattresses procured should be of standard, so that they could last longer. This will save cost and improve the welfare of inmates.

Responses in 2024

No Response was provided

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

Except for the female correctional centres which had adequate beds and bedding due to the number of inmates at these centres, beds/mattresses at the male correctional facilities visited were still deplorable. Beds were without bed nets, the beddings were torn and tattered. For instance, the Waterloo Correctional Centre with 345 inmates during our visit had only 52 mattresses of 3*6ft small size, which can barely accommodate two persons per mattress. Focus-group discussions with inmates revealed that most of them were sleeping on the bare floor. The OC revealed in an interview that the insufficiency of beds and beddings was as a result of the increase in the number of inmates and the limited supply to the centres.

The lack of adequate beds and beddings at the correctional centres could expose inmates to diseases such as acute cold, malaria, and skin rashes. The photo in Figure 3 shows the condition of beds and beddings at the Waterloo Correctional Centre.

Figure 3: Photo showing Beds and Bedding at the Waterloo Pre-detention Correctional Centre



Photo: Credit ASSL. Photo taken on *on 24th October, 2024*

Recommendation

The DG should ensure that adequate supply of beds and beddings are supplied to the centres based on the number of inmates. In addition, the mattresses procured should be of the required standard so that they can last longer. The DG should also engage the relevant authorities including the donor partners in providing the support that meet the basic needs of inmates.

Management Response

Management is aware of the bedding challenge at the correctional facilities. The contract for the procurement of beddings is ongoing. We are now waiting for the certificate of approval for the procurement of beddings. Once the supply commences, these items will be distributed to our respective centres across the country. See reminder for verification.

Auditor's Comment:

We acknowledge the steps taken by the SLCS for the procurement of beds and beddings. The request relating to the certificate for approval for the procurement of beds and beddings was made available for verification. However, this issue is considered unresolved until the bed and beddings are procured and supplied to the various centres.

2.2.4 Toilet Facilities

Recommendation

The DG should escalate the issue to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and ensure that adequate toilet facilities are provided at the centres to meet the demands of inmates. Otherwise, inmates may be exposed to contagious/infectious diseases which may lead to death.

Responses in 2024

The SLCS senior management is aware of the limited toilet facility at the Freetown Male Correctional Centre. There is an ongoing project for the construction of toilet facilities at the Freetown Male Correctional Centre. Moreover, the new cell blocks and correctional facilities under construction at the different locations have modern toilet facilities.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

The team observed that the provincial correctional centres have fairly adequate and clean toilet facilities. The toilet facilities at the Freetown Male Correctional Centre has been a challenge since 2021. This is due to the increase in the number of inmates. As a result, inmates are seen defecating and having their baths in the open yard as shown in the photo in Figure 4. This demoralises the dignity of these inmates and can also lead to easy spread of diseases within the Centre. The team verified the six toilets under construction at the Centre which are grossly inadequate to meet the needs of over 1,000 inmates.

The inmates still use plastic buckets to defecate when the cells are closed, as there were no toilet facilities within the cells as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Photo showing Toilet Facilities at the Freetown Male Correctional Centre



Photo: Credit ASSL. Photo taken *on 8th November, 2024*

Figure 5: Photo showing Plastic Buckets used by Inmates when Cells are Closed



Photo taken at the Freetown Male Correctional Centre on the 8th November, 2024

Recommendation

The DG should ensure that adequate toilet facilities are provided at the centres to meet the needs of the inmates; otherwise, inmates may be exposed to contagious/infectious disease which may lead to death.

Management`s Response

In response to the above, the SLCS`s senior management is aware of the limited toilet facilities at the Freetown Male Correctional Centre. However, the construction of additional toilet facilities at the said Centre is ongoing. See request and pictorial evidences for verification.

Auditor’s Comment:

We have taken note of the actions by management to address the problems relating to toilet facilities. We were able to physically verify the construction of additional toilets at the Waterloo and the Freetown Male Correctional Centres. However, more toilets need to be constructed in the other centres to meet the demands of inmates. This issue is considered partially resolved.

2.2.5 Water Facilities

Recommendation

The DG should escalate the issue to the supervisory ministry and prioritise the issue when budgets are prepared. He should also approach other donor agencies to assist in the construction of hand-dug wells.

Responses in 2024

Water facilities at our correctional centres have improved over the period. The Freetown Male Correctional Centre receives water from the Guma Valley Water Company. It also has submersible water pumps that usually fill the tanks installed within the facility. In addition, the SLCS has procured two water bowers that are always on standby to provide water at the centres during emergencies, especially within Freetown.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

The auditors observed during the audit exercise that water facilities at the various correctional centres have improved. We observed in the provinces that, the UNDP supported the correctional centres with borehole facilities as shown in Figure 6, and SALWACO in addition, provides regular water supply. Similarly, the Guma Valley Water Company provides centres in Freetown with regular water supply.

Figure 6: Photo showing Borehole Facilities at the Makeni and Waterloo Correctional Centres



Photo: Credit ASSL. Photo taken on 24th and 25th October, 2024

Recommendation

The DG should ensure that the SLCS continues its efforts to sustain water facilities in the various correctional centres. The DG should also continue liaising with donor agencies to assist in the construction of hand-dug wells in the centres.

Management's Response

Management appreciates the audit team for such observation. Water facility at our correctional centres have improved over the period. The Freetown Male Correctional Centre receives water from the Guma Valley Water Company. It also has submassive bore hole that usually fill the tanks installed within the facility. In addition, the SLCS with support from the Government of Sierra Leone has procured two water bowsers that are always on standby to provide water at the Centre during emergencies, especially within Freetown.

Auditor's Comment:

We were able to physically verify the water facilities at various correctional centres that we visited. The progress made by the SLSC in this area is satisfactory. Our recommendations have therefore been implemented.

2.2.6 Food for Inmates

Recommendation

The Nutritionist should ensure that the catering officers comply with the SLCS Strategic Plan by providing three square meals per day. There should be regular monitoring and training for catering officers and a stern warning should be given to them to abstain from using monosodium crystal when preparing food for inmates. The Nutritionist should also ensure that basic kitchen equipment are provided to preserve food.

Responses in 2024

Inmates are fed three times a day according to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rule 20 section (1). The Nutritionist has never included monosodium crystal commonly known as white maggie in the schedule of requirements for the procurement of diet for inmates in all correctional centres nationwide. Since the 2021 Performance Audit, all kitchens across the country have been provided with the appropriate kitchen utensils needed for food preparation for inmates. The Nutritionist is monitoring the various centres on a quarterly basis to ensure that the kitchen utensils are correctly used and safely kept.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

The diet arrangement for inmates at the various correctional centres remains the same as in the previous audit findings. Inmates were provided with meals twice a day. Breakfast was served at 7:00am and

lunch was served between 12:00pm and 3:30pm. The ration provided for lunch which was a basin of rice, was meant for both lunch and dinner. Informal interactions with the inmates revealed that most of the inmates ate their ration once because of the little quantity that was served, leaving them with nothing for dinner.

The use of monosodium crystal commonly known as white maggie was common in almost all the correctional centres except for Makeni Male, Freetown Female, and Reintegration Correctional Centres.

The mestin (dish) and cups used by inmates at the Freetown male, Waterloo predetention, Makeni, Bo Correctional Centres were worn out as shown in Figure 7 below. Interview with the Nutritionist in charge of the correctional centres, revealed that the activities relating to food and nutrition of inmates in the provincial correctional centres were not monitored due to unavailability of funds for monitoring exercises.

Figure 7: Photo showing Monosodium Crystal/White Maggie used for Cooking at the Centres



Photo: Credit ASSL. Photo taken on 21st – 23rd October, 2024

Recommendation

The DG should ensure that provision is made for regular monitoring of the catering officers to maintain the stipulated feeding schedule (thrice a day) and abstain from the use of monosodium crystal when preparing food for inmates.

Management Response

Management is grateful for the auditors' observation. However, inmates are fed three times a day according to the United Nations Minimum Standard Rule 20 section one (1). It is worth noting that the nutritionist has never included monosodium crystal commonly known as "white maggie" in the schedule of requirement for the supply of diet to inmates at any correctional centre. In addition, we will continue to encourage all caterers to work in this direction. Kindly find attach the schedule of requirement for verification.

Auditor`s Comment:

We were able to verify in the contract agreement that Maggie cubes were in the schedule of requirement for the supply of diet to inmates. We were however not able to find any evidence to indicate that the work of the catering officers was monitored. Until this is addressed, we will consider this issue unresolved.

2.2.7 Kitchen Facilities

Recommendation

The Nutritionist should ensure the provision of essential kitchen equipment for proper storage and production of diets for inmates. There should also be regular monitoring on the upkeep of the kitchen equipment.

Responses in 2024

The technical officers will be tasked to construct kitchen sinks, shelves and cabinets in all the correctional facilities across the country, in order to enhance kitchen activities.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

The auditors observed that recommendations on essential kitchen equipment for proper storage and production of diets were still not addressed. The kitchens still lacked basic equipment such as refrigerator for storage of perishable food items, shelves, tables, kitchen cabinets, sinks, and kitchen towels. The response provided by the SLCS was that: “The technical officers will be tasked to construct kitchen sinks, shelves and cabinets in all the correctional facilities across the country in order to enhance kitchen activities”. However, there was no evidence indicating that construction has started.

Recommendation

The DG should ensure the provision of essential kitchen equipment for proper storage and production of diets for inmates. There should also be regular monitoring on the upkeep of the kitchen equipment.

Management`s Response

In response to this query, the utensils used by caterers on the preparation of inmates diet at our correctional facilities will continue to be monitored as recommended by the auditors for safety.

Auditor`s Comment:

We were able to verify the provision of freezers at the Freetown male and reintegration correctional centres. We were however not able to find any evidence to indicate that this same provision has been made in the other centres. This issue is considered partially resolved.

Furthermore, we were not able to verify/find any evidence that monitoring the use of kitchen equipment was done at the Freetown male and reintegration correctional centres. Therefore, this issue is considered unresolved.

2.2.8 Recreational Facilities for Inmates

Recommendation

The DG should ensure that indoor games are provided at various centres to help inmates stay healthy, reduce the risk of disease, and improve their physical and mental wellbeing. The DG should also escalate the issue of the establishment of playgrounds to higher authorities, since it forms a major aspect in the wellbeing of inmates.

Responses in 2024

No response received.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

Even though the SLCS did not provide response with regards recreational facilities for inmate, the team observed during the audit exercise that televisions were placed in the various centres visited. Recreational facilities remains a challenge due to the unavailability of land space as was confirmed during interviews with the OCs of the Bo Male and Makeni correctional centres. We observed that the findings on recreational facilities for Makeni, Bo, Reintegration Centre, Pre-detention and Stimulation Centre, and the Freetown Female Correctional Centres remain the same.

The Mafanta and Pademba Road Correctional Centres, have adequate space for recreational activities. For instance, these centres have pitches where inmates play football games. The non-provision of recreational facilities to these correctional centres may lead to depression, fatigue and non-effective functionality to the human body of the inmates.

Recommendation

The DG should ensure that basic indoor games are provided at various centres to help inmates stay healthy, reduce stress, and improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

Management's Response

The Freetown Male and Mafanta correctional centres have established football fields for inmates' recreational activities. Other centres have as well improvised to facilitate inmates' recreation and inmates often organize football tournaments at these centres. In addition, indoor games like ludo, draught and cards are also present in all our centres. All these are geared towards improving inmates' mood, reduce stress and improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

Auditor`s Comment:

We acknowledge the response from management. We were able to physically verify the football fields at the Freetown Male and Mafanta Correctional Centres. Indoor games were also verified in the centres visited, with the exception of the Reintegration and the Waterloo male and female correctional centres. The issue has been partially resolved.

2.3 REFORMATION, REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION

2.3.1 Training, Equipment and Capacity Building

Recommendation

The DG should ensure the following:

- Engage development partners to assist in providing training equipment and strengthen the rehabilitation and reintegration programmes in all correctional centres.
- Roll out the university and other technical skills programmes to all centres.

This will enhance and develop the skills of inmates so that they are easily integrated into society after serving their jail terms.

Response in 2024

Reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration are very important for inmates' reformation. The SLCS has secured equipment from the UNDP and through government funding to facilitate inmates' training and rehabilitation. Development partners are also coming in to facilitate inmates' rehabilitation. The SLCS has collaborated with the University of Makeni (UNIMAK) which currently provides university education to inmates. At the end of their study, the inmates are given certificates that enable them to gain employment upon discharge.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

The audit team observed that the recommendations relating to the development of standard guidelines for the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates were not implemented. We acknowledge the equipment from the UNDP and the GoSL to facilitate inmates' training and rehabilitation. We however observed that previous audit recommendations on reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration activities or training within the Male Reintegration Centre, the Pre-detention and Stimulation Centre, the Bo and Makeni Female Correctional Centres were not implemented. The prison break of 26th November, 2024 also affected the Freetown Male Correctional Centre as the technical workshops were completely burnt down. The following were also observed:

Makeni Correctional Centre

The centre has a carpentry workshop, a bakery and a tailoring shop. We however observed that the spaces were not adequate for the facilities established there, and they were also not well-equipped. A lecture hall used by the University of Makeni to train inmates had been constructed at the Centre. Inmates at both the Male and Female Correctional Centres are given certificates upon completion of their courses in various skills such as Entrepreneurship, Administration and Management.

Bo Male Correctional Centre

The centre has a tailoring shop with one functioning sewing machine and a bakery. The OC explained that, they are challenged with space and equipment. The auditors however observed that the equipment (sewing machines) for the skills trainings were inadequate to cater for the number of inmates that were willing to be trained, even though they were trained in batches. Much has not been done to rehabilitate inmates at this centre.

Mafanta Correctional Centre

The Centre has functioning tailoring, carpentry and barbing shops. Inmates are also engaged in shoe-making and farming (poultry included). There is also a functioning bakery in the Centre. The audit team acknowledged the tailoring and agricultural support provided by the UNDP. These include:

- 10 sewing machines
- Two overlocking machines
- One designing machine
- 10 watering can

Reformation and rehabilitation programme will improve the ability of inmates to successfully reintegrate into society and live crime-free lives. Providing them with education, work and training opportunities can also normalise their time in prison; making it closer to life in the community and helping prisoners live independently after release.

Recommendation

The DG should continue to engage development partners to assist with training equipment and strengthen the rehabilitation and reintegration programme in the other correctional centres. Rolling out the university programme to all the centres will enhance and develop the skills of inmates so that they are easily integrated into society after serving their jail terms.

Management's Response

Reformation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration is very important for inmates' reformation within the correctional fold. Moving forward, the SLCS has secured equipment from UNDP and through government funding to facilitate inmates training and rehabilitation. Development partners are as well coming in to facilitate inmates' rehabilitation within our centres.

In another development, the SLCS has collaborated with the University of Makeni (UNIMAK) and are currently providing university education to inmates. At the end of their studies, the inmates are given certificates that will enable them gain employment after serving their sentences.

Auditor's Comment

We were able to verify the equipment received from the UNDP at the Mafanta Correctional Centre and the collaboration with the University of Makeni (UNIMAK) to provide university education to inmates. There is however need for the management of the SLSC to improve on the reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration activities at the Male Reintegration Centre, the Pre-detention and Stimulation Centre, and the Bo Male and Female Correctional Centres. Therefore, the issues have been partially resolved.

2.3.1 Earning Scheme for Inmates

Recommendation

The DG should ensure that the bank ID cards identifying legitimate inmates on the earning scheme are provided for audit verification.

Response in 2024

Earning scheme exists at the SLCS for inmates that are involved in various work in the prison facilities. The bank ID cards for inmates will be available for verification.

Findings from the Follow-up Audit

Rule 96 of the UN Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "Sentenced prisoners shall have the opportunity to work and or to actively participate in their rehabilitation, subject to a determination of physical and mental fitness by a physician or other qualified medical-care professionals. Also, sufficient work of a useful nature shall be provided to keep prisoners actively employed for a normal day work.

The United Nations Development Project (UNDP) provide support for inception training on the specific industries agreed by the SLCS. Selected inmates should come from the batch of inmates who were undergoing training under the Sierra Leone Government Technical Institute. The earning scheme is a form of savings for participants on the content of the industry work. The scheme will enable the inmate meet family and own needs within the course of incarceration.

From the sampled correctional centres visited, it was observed that, the Mafanta Correctional Centre is the only centre that still operates the earning scheme programme. A review of the bank ID cards, bank pay-in slips and transaction ledgers revealed that earnings made by the inmates are deposited in their respective bank accounts. Interviews with the OCs at the Bo, Male Reintegration, Freetown Female, Waterloo, Makeni, and Pademba Road Correctional Centres revealed that the earning scheme has not been operational in their centres as the inmates do not have any income generating activities.

Recommendation

The DG should continue to engage development partners to provide the necessary equipment that will strengthen the rehabilitation and reintegration programme in the other correctional centres to boost the earning scheme.

Management's Response

Currently, earning scheme for inmates only exist at Mafanta Correctional Centre. Freetown Male Correctional Centre do have, but all the documents and ID cards with regards the earning scheme including the monies cumulated for bank deposit were all burnt and lost during the April 29th 2020, and November 26th 2023 incidents. Also, Makeni and Magburaka Correctional Centres do have earning schemes supported by the UNDP, but all those who were enlisted have completed their jail terms and given their ID cards. The centres are yet to start another one.

Auditor's Comment:

We have taken note of the response from management. In this regard, we were able to verify that the Mafanta Correctional Centre is still maintaining the earning scheme. There is however need for the SLCS to strengthen the rehabilitation and reintegration programme in the other correctional centres to boost the earning scheme. The issue has been partially addressed.

2.4 OTHER OBSERVATIONS

2.4.1 Female Inmates with Children

Section 21(1) of the Child Right Act, 2022 states: “A child born in detention has a right to special care, educaion and training to develop his maximum potential and be self reliant”.

The team observed during our visit to the Freetown, Makeni and Bo Female Correctional Centres that three inmates were with children in the centres as shown in Figure 8. Interviews with the OCs and inmates disclosed that these children were delivered at the centres and kept in the cells up to three years of age, before giving them to relatives with the consent of their mothers. It was also noted that food, clothing, medical and diapers for these infants were based on humanitarian aids as provisions are not made for them by the SLCS.

Figure 8: Infants at Female Correctional Centres Visited

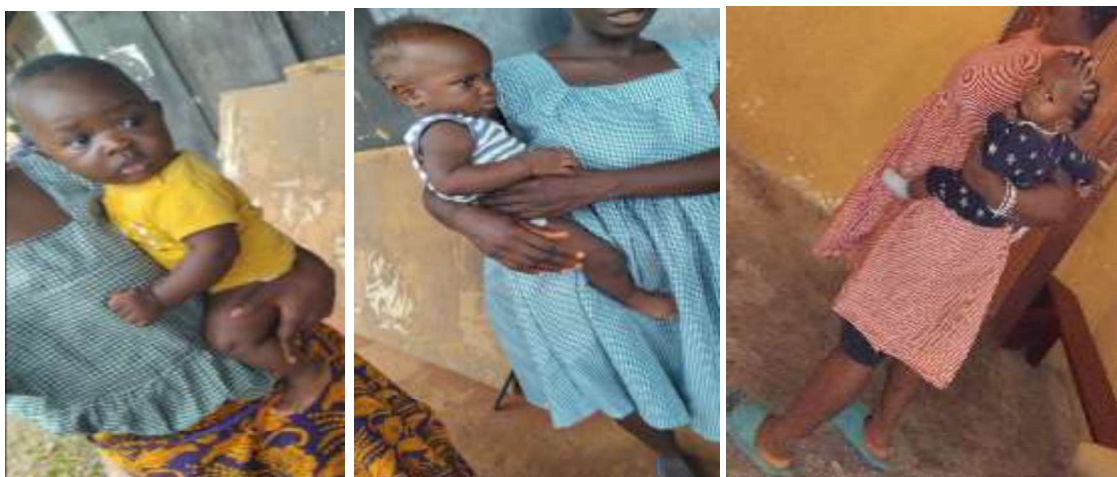


Photo Credit: ASSL. Photo taken on 21st – 23rd October, 2024

The team’s engagement with the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs on the issue relating to infants found in the correctional centres revealed that, when they are informed by the SLCS, together with development partners (AdvocAid, World Vision, Caritas, World Hope), they provide food, clothing, diapers and psycho-social support to lactating mothers in detention. We were also informed that they were not aware about the existence of infants in the centres that we visited (Makeni, Bo and Freetown Female Correctional Centres).

According to the Assistant Director at the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs, there is a Child Welfare Committee that meets quarterly at national level, and monthly at district level to address issues relating to lactating mothers in the various correctional centres. The Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs has a Memorandum of Understanding with St. Georges Foundation, Don-Bosco and the Raining Season Homes where these children are taken with the consent of their mothers in situations where they are unable to trace family members that are willing to take responsibility of them.

Nonetheless, there is no policy on how long a child should stay in the centre. The Assistant Director further explained that, currently, the Child Right Bill is being reviewed, and when approved, it will address issues relating to children born in detention.

Recommendation

DG should:

- Design a policy that guides infants in detention. This should include the length of time infants should stay in detention and the procedures for releasing them to other family members and care homes.
- Inform the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs whenever lactating mothers are taken to correctional centres, so that the necessary support can be provided for the infants.

Management's Response

Management do appreciate the auditors observation on the issue of female inmates with children within correctional centres. We will continue to engage the Ministry to be stepping in promptly whenever pregnant women and lactating mothers are sent into our centres.

In addition, the institution has initiated the construction of "Child Friendly Centres" in all Regional Headquarter Correctional Centres. With time, these centres will be equipped with play toys where these inmate's children will be playing during the day until they join their mothers later in their cells.

Auditor's Comment:

We have taken note of the response from management, and will therefore keep this issue in view for the subsequent audit.

CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the audit objective and reflects our explanations and views based on analysis and findings supported by audit evidence as presented in the previous chapters.

The transformation from Prison to Correctional Service over the years in Sierra Leone aimed to address the human right abuses resulting from overcrowding, lack of adequate infrastructure and resources, lack of rehabilitation and reformation activities to develop skills of inmates and also work towards self-sufficiency. The findings and recommendations in 2021 were to help the SLCS improve on their operations.

The SLCS, donor partners and non-governmental organisations are working effortlessly to achieve this reality. We acknowledge the effort made by the government and development partners to aid the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates into the society after their jail terms, and the provision of essential facilities. The rehabilitation and reintegration programmes have ensured inmates are engaged in various skills development trainings. The construction of new centres to decongest the existing correctional centres were also noted. There have been tremendous efforts in the provision of drugs at the various correctional centres. However, there is need to do more as only 6 out of the 23 recommendations have been fully implemented.

The following are specific conclusions on the audit:

- There was no evidence to indicate that inmates were examined before discharge, contrary to section 37 of the SLCS Act, 2014 which requires that: “Upon admission to and immediately before discharge from a correctional centre, every inmate shall be examined by the Medical Officer.”
- Overcrowding still remains a challenge, even with the ongoing construction of centres and the establishment of the Prison and Judicial Court.
- In 2021, inmates were engaged in industrial activities including weaving, shoe making, carpentry, tailoring, soap making, welding, electrical/electronics, bead making. This was not evident during the follow-up audit, though most of the centres have these facilities, the equipment were not available especially at the Bo, Makeni, Male Reintegration and the Females Correctional Centres.
- Uniforms, beds and bedding were inadequate in most of the centres visited. The inmates’ uniforms were torn and tattered. The 1000 distributed to various centres were still inadequate, as there were centres that were not supplied.
- There is need to improve on the management of kitchen facilities. There is also need for effective monitoring and training in the centres.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Document	Responsible Person
Contract agreements for diet, drugs, rations	Procurement Officer, SLCS Headquarters
Standing orders 2024	Director, Support Service, SLCS Headquarters
Preliminary medical form	Nurses-in-charge at the various correctional centres visited
Delivery notes of drugs	Nurses-in-charge at the various correctional centres visited
List of minor cases	Officers-in-charge at the various correctional centres visited
Request memo	Officers-in-charge at the various correctional centres visited
Minutes of Medical Board meetings	Officers-in-charge at the Bo and Makeni Correctional Centres visited

APPENDIX 2:

LIST OF PERSONNEL INTERVIEWED

Correctional Centre	Designation
Bo Male and Female Correctional Centre	Officer-in-charge in the correctional centres visited
	Officer yard
	Medical officers
	Cooks
	Inmates
Makeni Male and Female Correctional Centre	Officer-in-charge in the correctional centres visited
	Officer yard
	Medical officers
	Cooks
	Inmates
Freetown Male and Female Correctional Centre	Officer-in-charge in the correctional centres visited
	Officer Yard

	Medical Officers
	Cooks
	Inmates
Mafanta Correctional Centre	Officer-in-charge in the correctional centres visited
	Cooks
	Inmates
Pre-trial Detention Correctional Centre	Officer-in-charge in the correctional centres visited
	Cooks
	Inmates
Reintegration Male Correctional Centre	Officer-in-charge in the correctional centres visited
	Cooks
	Inmates
SLCS Headquarters	Procurement Officer
SLCS Nutritionist	Nutritionist
SLCS Medical Superintendent	Medical Superintendent
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs	Various

APPENDIX 3:

LIST OF CORRECTIONAL CENTRES VISITED

Date	Correctional Centre	Number of Sleeping Inmates at the Time of Visit
8th December, 2024	Pademba Road	1872
31st October, 2024	Female Correctional	98
31st October, 2024	Reintegration	220
23rd October, 2024	Mafanta	710
21st October, 2024	Bo – Male	384
22nd October, 2024	Bo – Female	22
25th October, 2024	Makeni – Male	354
24th October, 2024	Makeni – Female	22
25th October, 2024	Waterloo – Male	354
25th October, 2024	Waterloo – Female	10

APPENDIX 4:
SCANNED RESPONSE

PA Performance Audit



Sierra Leone Correctional Service Headquarters

New England Ville Freetown, Sierra Leone

E-mail: info@slcs.gov.sl

Tel: +232-76- 826101/76-826175/76-826125

CS.1/50/Vol. IV/92

From: The Principal Staff Officer

**To: Auditor General
Audit Service Sierra Leone**

18th
June 2025

FORWARDING OF A CORRECTED VERSION OF PERFORMANCE AUDIT QUERIES

JAN –DEC 2024

I am directed to write and to formerly forward a corrected version of responses
in respect of Audit queries for Sierra Leone Correctional Service.

Looking forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.



MB Conteh - (CSC)
For Director General
Sierra Leone Correctional Service.

Correctional Headquarters
New England Ville
Freetown
MBC



Sierra Leone Correctional Service Headquarters
New England Ville, Freetown, Sierra Leone,

18th June, 2025

Auditor General
Audit Service Sierra Leone

Dear Sir,

RE: FOLLOW UP ON ACTIONS RELATED TO PERFORMANCE AUDIT ON
THE WELFARE OF INMATES AT THE SIERRA LEONE CORRECTIONAL
SERVICE

I refer to your letter dated 22nd May, 2025 on the above-mentioned subject and hereby submit status on the performance audit queries of 2019 - 2023 for the Sierra Leone Correctional Service.

Please find attached copies of the responses in respect of the follow up actions related to the performance audit on welfare of inmates at the Sierra Leone Correctional Service.

Thank you for your usual cooperation.

FOLLOW UP ON ACTIONS RELATED TO PERFORMANCE AUDIT ON THE WELFARE OF INMATES AT THE SIERRA LEONE CORRECTIONAL SERVICE

2.1 CUSTODY OF INMATES

2.1.1 Examination of Inmates on Admission and before Discharge

Action Taken:

Management acknowledges auditors finding. There are existing admission and discharge boards in every correctional Centre across the country with the medical officer attached at each correctional Centre as they form part of the board. However Management will make sure the Medical Officer attached to each Correctional Centre provide the relevant document to justify the medical condition of inmates upon discharge in subsequent reports as enshrined in the Correctional Service act.

2.1.2 Separation of Inmates in Cells

Action Taken

Management agrees with the auditor's comments with regards the separation of inmates according to their crimes in line with international standards.

However, successful separation of inmates in our correctional facilities still remains to be a challenge due to overcrowding and inadequate space in our facilities. Furthermore, SLCS continues to engage government to improve on existing correctional facilities and build new ones to curb the overcrowding challenge that will lead to successful separation and categorization of inmates.

2.1.3 Insane Inmates within the Centres

Action Taken:

Management is grateful for auditors' finding. It is true that the SLCS does not have its own professional psychiatrist. Therefore, suspected mental illness cases are often referred to the appropriate professionals of which there is only one practicing

psychiatrist in the whole country. As a result, dealing with suspected mental cases at our correctional facilities especially in the provinces still remain a big challenge.

2.1.4 Poor Storage and Accounting for Medical Supplies at Correctional Facilities

Action Taken:

The SLCS acknowledges this audit finding. The issue of space is a key challenge facing all correctional facilities across SLCS. Going forward, we are encouraging Centre managers to manage the existing facilities to make it more conducive for drug storage. The lack of sustainable power supply at most of the facilities means they cannot provide a one hundred percent conducive environment for the storage of the medical supplies they received.

2.2 Facilities Provided for Inmates

2.2.1 Accommodation

Action Taken

Overcrowding in our correctional centres remains a serious challenge across the country. The SLCS is however constructing additional facilities at Waterloo and Moyamba where inmates shall be transferred upon completion to decongest the existing centres. See pictorial evidences for verification.

In addition, the Judiciary has also contributed in decongestion of our centres. Currently, an established judicial court holds at our correctional facilities to review cases with minor offences and release inmates with fines. This further helps to decongest our centres.

2.2.2 Uniforms for inmates

Action Taken:

The SLCS have entered into a contract for the supply of uniforms for all inmates of our correctional centres across the country. The implementation of the contract was done and we have received part of the supply in 2024 for our inmates and still waiting for the next supply. See distribution list for verification.

2.2.3 Beddings

Action Taken:

Management is aware of the bedding challenge at the correctional facilities. The contract for the Procurement of beddings is ongoing. We are now waiting for the certificate of approval for the procurement of beddings. Once the supply commences, these items will be distributed to our respective centres across the country. See reminder for verification.

2.2.4 Toilet Facilities

Action Taken:

In response to this regard, the SLCS senior management is aware of the limited toilet facilities at the Freetown Male Correctional Centre. However, the construction of additional toilet facilities at the said Centre is ongoing. See request and pictorial evidences for verification

2.2.5 Water Facilities

Action Taken:

Management appreciates the audit team for such observation. Water facility at our correctional centres have improved over the period. The Freetown Male Correctional Centre receives water from the Guma Valley Water Company. It also has sub massive bore hole that usually fill the tanks installed within the facility. In addition, the SLCS with support from the government of Sierra Leone has procured

no water bowsers that are always on standby to provide water at the Centre during emergencies, especially within Freetown.

2.2.6 Food for Inmates

Action Taken:

Management is grateful for auditors' observation. However, inmates are fed three times a day according to the United Nations Minimum Standard Rule 20 section one (1). It is worth noting that the nutritionist has never included monosodium crystal commonly known as "white Maggie" in the schedule of requirement for the supply of diet for inmates at any correctional Centre. In addition, we will continue to encourage all caterers to work in this direction. Kindly find attach the schedule of requirement for verification.

2.2.7 Kitchen Facilities

Action Taken

In response to this query, the utensils used by caterers in the preparation of inmates diet at our correctional facilities will continue be well monitored as recommended by the auditors for safety.

2.2.8 Recreational Facilities for Inmates

Action Taken:

The Freetown Male and Mafanta correctional centres have established football fields for inmates' recreational activities. Other centres have as well improvised to facilitate inmates' recreation and inmates often organize football tournaments at these centres.

In addition, indoor games like ludo, draff and cards are also present in all our centres. All these geared towards improving inmates' mood, reduce stress and improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

2.3 Reformation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Action Taken:

Reformation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration is very important for inmates' reformation within the correctional fold. Moving forward, the UNDP has provided equipment for Agriculture, baking, and tailoring for Mafanta Correctional Centre to facilitate inmates training and rehabilitation. We will also continue to engage other development partners to replicate such to other correctional centres.

In another development, SLCS has collaborated with the University of Makeni (UNIMAK) and are currently providing university education to inmates. At the end of their studies the inmates are given certificates that will enable them gain employment after serving their sentence.

2.31 Earning Scheme for Inmates

Action Taken

Currently, earning scheme for inmates only exist at Mafanta Correctional Centre. Freetown Male Correctional Centre do have, but all the documents and ID cards with regards the earning scheme including the monies cumulated for bank deposit were all burnt and lost during the April 29th 2020 and November 26th 2023 riot. Also, Makeni and Magburaka Correctional Centres do have earning scheme supported by UNDP, but all those who were enlisted have completed their jail terms and given their ID cards. The centres are yet to start another one.

2.4 OTHER OBSERVATIONS

2.4.1 Female Inmates with Children

Action Taken

Management do appreciate auditor's observation on the issue of female inmates with children within correctional centres. We will continue to engage the Ministry to be stepping in promptly whenever pregnant women and lactating mothers are sent into our centres.

In addition, the institution has initiated the construction of "Child Friendly Centres" in all Regional Headquarter Correctional Centres. With time, these centres will be equipped with play toys where these inmate's children will be playing during the day until they join their mothers later in their cells.



Mr. Joseph J. Senesie
Director General
Sierra Leone Correctional service.