

Wednesday, 31 July 2019

Prison staff passion is praised

The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Stephen Dalton, has praised the 'passionate' staff at the prison for their work in preparing prisoners to rejoin the island community after serving their sentences.

His Excellency and Lady Dalton had a behind-the-scenes tour of the prison last week when they spoke to staff and prisoners and looked around various areas, including a prison wing, the visiting area and the Reintegration Unit.

Although the couple have visited the States of Jersey Prison Service before, they had asked the Prison Governor, Nick Cameron, for an informal tour of the specific work undertaken by the various departments.

During their tour of the visiting area, His Excellency and Lady Dalton were shown specialised computers that prisoners use to make video calls. The service, which uses encrypted technology to assist with security, has been popular among prisoners, with 80 video calls made since it was launched in April. The new video court system, which went live in April and allows defendants to appear in the Magistrate's Court via video link from the prison, was also part of the tour, as was the more relaxed family section of the visiting area where prisoners can spend quality time with their children on specialist family visit sessions.

As well as a visit to the stores and engineer areas – where deliveries are securely made and site plumbing and electrical maintenance is carried out, as well as repairing locks – His Excellency and Lady Dalton were given a tour of a wing where prisoners were out of their cells and engaged in various activities such as working and cleaning.

At the Reintegration Unit, His Excellency and Lady Dalton heard about the ways in which programmes are designed to accommodate the needs of prisoners, from mental and physical wellbeing to vocational and educational courses, so they are personally and work ready for release.

His Excellency praised the integrated nature of the prison departments.

“The care that is evident from both the officers and specialists at the prison is very reassuring as well as impressive – there’s a clear passion to find that ‘better’ way of doing things for the prisoners,” he said. “From an island perspective, it is reassuring to know that staff are passionate about helping prisoners reintegrate into society, and that is going to help everyone in Jersey.”

The Prison Governor, Nick Cameron, said that he was delighted to have an opportunity to show His Excellency and Lady Dalton the many facets of the prison.

“All the work that we do at the prison underpins our aim to reduce reoffending by ensuring that prisoners get whatever support they need in order to reintegrate back into the community,” he said. “I am lucky to lead a talented, passionate and committed team of officers and specialists who work tirelessly to make Jersey a safer place.”