



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

Report on Legalised Police Cells

December 2011

The Scottish Ministers

In accordance with my terms of reference as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, I forward a report of inspections of the Legalised Police Cells in Scotland which were carried out in 2011-12.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hugh Monro". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid horizontal line that extends to the right.

Hugh Monro CBE
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

December 2011

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1 There are nine Police Stations in Scotland where cells have been 'legalised'. Prisoners (rather than individuals taken into custody by the police) can be held in these cells for up to 30 days. The cells are in stations which are not near to prisons: Hawick, Kirkwall, Lerwick, Lochmaddy, Stornoway, Thurso, Campbeltown, Dunoon and Oban. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons has a duty to inspect these cells and report on the conditions and treatment of prisoners in them.

1.2 A number of general issues are raised in relation to the Legalised Police Cells, as well as matters in connection with individual cells (a summary of these is provided at Chapter 2).

1.3 The need for some of these Legalised Police Cells has been raised in previous inspections but has become even more of an issue in recent years, particularly since the contracting out of escort arrangements in 2004. The key recommendation in this report is that the Legalised Police Cells at Lochmaddy, Thurso, Campbeltown, Dunoon and Oban are discontinued.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 A number of common themes and issues are highlighted:

- The most recent version of the Prison Rules and other information notices should be available.
- Information on how to access the relevant Visiting Committee and how to make a complaint should be available.
- All prisoners should be provided with the opportunity to exercise in the open air.
- Toilets in cells should be screened.

2.2 A number of common areas of good practice are highlighted:

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception.
- The Visiting Committees routinely use a checklist created by members when they inspect.
- There are good relationships between court, police and escort staff.

2.3 Matters of Concern for Individual Legalised Police Cells:

Hawick

- Toilets in cells are not screened.
- There are no hand washing facilities in the cells
- There is no cell furniture.
- There is no electric power in the cells.
- In cell CCTV (installed in two of the cells) gives a view of the entire cell including the toilet.
- The Visiting Committee Book is not signed routinely by members when they are inspecting.

Kirkwall

- Toilets in cells are not screened.
- There is no opportunity for exercise in the open air.
- A copy of the Prison Rules was not available.
- If 'legalised' prisoners are to be kept for more than a day they should see a Medical Practitioner within 24 hours.

Lerwick

- The toilets in the cells are unscreened.
- There is no furniture in the cells.
- There is no opportunity to exercise in the fresh air.
- There was no information about the Visiting Committee or how to access it.

Lochmaddy

- Record keeping was not detailed enough to determine if any prisoners being held were females.
- Prisoners had to leave their cells to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- There were no notices available in foreign languages.
- There was no information available on how to contact the Visiting Committee or make a complaint.
- It was not possible to determine when the Visiting Committee had last visited.
- A copy of the Koran and a Prayer Mat were not available.

Stornoway

- Toilets in cells are not screened.
- There is no cell furniture available.
- There is no opportunity for access to the fresh air.
- An up to date copy of the Prison Rules was not available.
- There were no complaints forms information about the SPSO or notices explaining how to complain.
- If 'legalised' prisoners are to be kept for more than a day they should see a Medical Practitioner within 24 hours.
- The Visiting Committee has not been formed adequately since the last inspection. There had been no monthly inspections or the required four meetings a year.

Thurso

- Toilets in cells are not screened.
- A copy of the Prison Rules was not available.
- Notices on the back of cell doors are out of date.

Campbeltown

- Toilets in cells are not screened.
- A copy of the Koran and Bible were not available.
- There was no information about how to contact the VC or how to complain. There were no complaint forms.

Dunoon

- Cells do not contain furniture.
- Toilets in cells are not screened.
- Hand washing facilities are not available in cells.
- Infection control issues in relation to communal towels, soap and nail brushes should be addressed.
- Male prisoners dressing and undressing in the shower area should not be in full view of others.
- Information on, and access to, the Prison Rules and the Scottish Prison Service Complaints Procedures should be made available.

Oban

- The cells should be redecorated.
- Toilets in cells are not screened.
- Facilities for disabled prisoners to shower should be in place.
- There was no information on how to complain and no access to the Prison Rules.

2.4 Examples of Good Practice in individual Legalised Police Cells:

Hawick

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception using a template created by Hawick police.
- All cells have information about community addiction services attached to the inside of the door.

Kirkwall

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception.
- There are extremely good relationships between all agencies.
- The Visiting Committee routinely uses a checklist created by members when they are inspecting.

Lerwick

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception.
- The Visiting Committee routinely uses a checklist created by members when they are inspecting.
- There are good relationships between court, police and escort staff.

Lochmaddy

Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception.

Stornoway

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception.
- Relationships between all parties seem to be positive.

Thurso

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception.

Campbeltown

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception.
- The arrangements for privacy with regards to CCTV.
- The Visiting Committee routinely uses a checklist created by members when they are inspecting.

Dunoon

- Robust procedures for the identification, location, supervision and treatment of those assessed on admission as being at risk from self harm or suicide are in place.
- A checklist is completed monthly by a member of the Visiting Committee to ensure that individuals in custody are being well treated and that standards are being maintained.

Oban

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception.
- The Visiting Committee routinely uses a checklist created by members when they are inspecting.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Legalised Police Cells at Lochmaddy, Thurso, Campbeltown, Dunoon and Oban are discontinued.

3. INSPECTION REPORTS

Lothian and Borders Police

Hawick – 15 March 2011

Introduction and Background

3.1 The Legalised Police Cells at Hawick were last inspected on 23rd July 2007. At that time there were six matters of concern raised but the report noted that the cells were very well managed. Five of the issues have been resolved although the one regarding unscreened toilets is still an issue. This is made worse by the fact that CCTV cameras in two of the cells now view the toilet as well.

In Attendance

3.2 The Inspectorate on this occasion comprised of the Inspector of Prisons. He was accompanied by Sergeant Cunningham, Custody Officer Douglas, Inspector Dutton and Mr Turnbull from the Visiting Committee. Discussions were also held with the Chief Superintendent.

Reception

3.3 Prisoners disembark in a small discrete area where the police vehicles are parked. They are double handcuffed and walked into the cells.

3.4 Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception using a template created by Hawick police. All cells have information about community addiction services attached to the inside of the door. These are both areas of **good practice**.

3.5 Prisoners' property and cash are checked in the presence of the prisoner and then held in a cupboard within a secure room. There is a compartment for each cell and all cash and property are listed and kept in a transparent sealed package.

3.6 There are dedicated Prisoner Custody Assistants who have received training in food handling, IT, officer security and first aid. The Custody Sergeant is responsible for the day-to-day management of the cells.

Cells and Facilities

3.7 There are five Legalised Police Cells located in a corridor. These are part of an overall suite of ten cells. All cells are clean, well maintained and free from graffiti. All cells have a plinth on which the mattress is placed. Each cell has a window which does not open. However, there is a ventilation system in place coupled with under floor heating. They also have a stainless steel WC. *None of the toilets are screened from the rest of the cell. There are no hand washing facility in the cells despite meals being eaten there.* Fresh drinking water is not available in the cells but prisoners have access to drinking water (and hand washing) through a request to staff. *No cell furniture is available.* The cells are all free of ligature points.

3.8 *There is no electric power in the cells.*

3.9 There is a notice board which informs prisoners on how to access a copy of the Prison Rules and the Visiting Committee (VC). There is also information available about how to make a complaint.

3.10 There are two observation cells which have CCTV installed. *This gives a view of the entire cell including the toilet which, as indicated above, is not screened.* A monitor is located in the cells office and at the custody sergeant's desk.

3.11 The cell call alarm system is in good working order. There is an audible buzzer and a light indicator at each door. The call system is relayed to a panel located in the office in the cells area and also to a panel on the Custody Sergeant's desk. CCTV covers the corridor in the cells area.

3.12 All staff on duty were knowledgeable about the assessment and management of individuals at risk of self-harm or suicide. Canvas clothing and bedding is available if necessary.

3.13 There are two shower rooms, one in each section. The rooms are identical with a large shower area and a wash hand basin. Prisoners can access hand washing facilities by asking a member of staff. Both areas have a full length door and are clean.

3.14 There have been very few prisoners held within the legalised cells since the escorting of prisoners was contracted out in 2006. Prior to 2009 the records held within the station were not detailed enough to ascertain how many prisoners had been held there since the last inspection. However in 2009 recording changed to show those who were committed to the legalised cells rather than those custodies who have been arrested and awaiting a court appearance. The numbers held have been:

2009 - Three male prisoners were held

2010 – Four male prisoners were held

2011 (to date) – Two male prisoners were held

3.15 There is no provision to hold female prisoners. They are always transferred to Edinburgh.

Access to Exercise

3.16 An exercise area is located at the end of the custody corridor. The yard is clean, of adequate size and is secure. Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure access to fresh air is facilitated to prisoners being held under the Prison Rules.

Information

3.17 A copy of the Prison Rules is available - and it is the most recent version. For those prisoners who do not speak English as their first language there is a language

identification notice and access to “Language Line” for immediate interpretation needs. There is also a list of interpreters available if required.

Visits Arrangements

3.18 There is no prisoner access to telephones but contact with relatives and legal representatives can be made on a prisoner’s behalf by a member of staff. There is a visits room within the area. This is only available on a closed visit basis, i.e. with a glass screen between the prisoner and visitor. Arrangements for facilitating visits are satisfactory.

Catering Arrangements

3.19 An extensive selection of microwave meals is available. All dietary, cultural and religious needs are catered for. No fresh fruit is available. The food preparation area is very clean and spacious

Medical Arrangements

3.20 Within the area there is a functional medical interview room. Medical support is provided via a telephone link with nurses at St. Leonards police station in Edinburgh or via the force Doctor contract. All LPC prisoners are seen within 24 hours by the force Doctor. In extreme emergencies individuals will be transferred to a hospital near Melrose 25 miles away. Only medication prescribed by the Doctor is given to prisoners and then only when it is packed in single doses. Methadone is administered by the Doctor.

Visiting Committee

3.21 There is no record of visits by the VC. The VC inspection book was available, although when it was checked it was discovered that there has not been any entries in this since 2004 despite visits having been made. *This book should be signed whenever a VC member inspects the facility.*

Additional Information

3.22 In a well stocked store room within the area there is an adequate supply of clean bedding, clothes, books and magazines. A prayer mat and a copy of the Koran and Bible are also available.

3.23 Fire evacuation procedures are sound with initial evacuation using the secure exercise yard. Long term evacuation would involve transporting prisoners to St. Leonards police station in Edinburgh.

3.24 Disabled prisoners are adequately catered for as all of the facilities are on the ground floor.

3.25 Matters of Concern

- Toilets in cells are not screened. (paragraph 3.7).

- There are no hand washing facilities in the cells (paragraph 3.7)
- There is no cell furniture (paragraph 3.7).
- There is no electric power in the cells (paragraph 3.7)
- In cell CCTV (installed in two of the cells) gives a view of the entire cell including the toilet (paragraph 3.10).
- The Visiting Committee Book is not signed routinely by members when they are inspecting. (paragraph 3.21).

3.26 Items of Good Practice

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception using a template created by Hawick police (paragraph 3.4).
- All cells have information about community addiction services attached to the inside of the door (paragraph 3.4).

Conclusions

3.27 Hawick is not busy with LPC prisoners but often full with police custodies. The cells area was clean and well maintained. Procedures were in place to ensure that any prisoner who is admitted will be safe and treated with dignity.

Northern Constabulary

Kirkwall - 1st June 2011

Introduction and Background

3.28 The Legalised Police Cells at Kirkwall were last inspected on 18th March 2008. At that time there were four matters of concern raised. Only one has been rectified.

In Attendance

3.29 The Inspectorate on this occasion comprised of the Chief Inspector and Inspector of prisons. They were accompanied by Sergeant Robb and VC convener Mr Drever.

Reception

3.30 Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception using a template created by Northern Constabulary. This is an area of **good practice**. Custody officers are knowledgeable about the care of prisoners who need support and they record observations on the police observation sheets. Personal Escort Record (PER) forms are also used to inform escort providers about any issues.

3.31 There are dedicated Custody Officers who are trained in food handling, IT, officer security and first aid. When custodies are being held in the cells it is usual practice to assign one of these police officers to the suite for out of office hours. There is a sound arrangement in place whereby escort staff work in the cells between 08.30 hrs to 17.00 hrs. The co-operation between escort staff and the police is excellent and together they ensure that custodies are looked after and that court appearances run smoothly. This is an area of **good practice**. All custody staff have been trained to carry out assessments and management of individuals at risk of self-harm or suicide.

3.32 For those prisoners who do not speak English as their first language there is a language identification notice and access to "Language Line" for immediate interpretation needs. There is also a list of interpreters available if required. Logistics dictate the availability but there is a good provision maintained.

3.33 Prisoners' property and cash is checked on reception, sealed and then held in a secure cupboard in the police desk.

Cells and Facilities

3.34 There are six Legalised Police Cells: four for male prisoners and two for females. They are all located in a corridor with males and females separated. The cells are also used for police custodies. All the cells were clean, well maintained and had no graffiti in them. All cells have a plinth on which the mattress is placed. Each cell has sunlight panels made up of small squares of hardened glass. There

are no windows but there is a good artificial ventilation system. This provides cool air in the summer and adequate heating in the winter.

3.35 Each cell has a stainless steel WC, which is not screened, and a small sink for hand washing. Fresh drinking water is also available from the sink. No cell furniture is available. The cells are all free of ligature points.

3.36 There is no electric power in the cells.

3.37 There is CCTV coverage in two of the male cells and in one of the female cells. This is monitored from the sergeants custody desk. These cells are used for monitoring vulnerable prisoners.

3.38 The cell call alarm system is in good working order. There is an audible buzzer to alert staff to the fact that a prisoner needs assistance. The call system is relayed to a panel located in the office in the cells area. There is also a staff alarm system operated through electronic wall strips along the cells corridor.

3.39 There are two shower rooms, one in each section. The rooms are identical, with a shower area and a wash hand basin. Both areas have a full length door and were clean and well maintained.

3.40 In a well stocked store room there is a supply of toiletries, clean bedding, books and magazines. Laundry is washed on site. A prayer mat, Koran and Bible are available

3.41 The LPCs have been used regularly for holding prisoners under the Prison Rules:

2008/09 - Seven male prisoners were held

2009/10 – 16 male and one female prisoners were held

2010/11 –28 male and one female prisoners were held

Access to Exercise

3.42 *There is no exercise area.*

Information

3.43 *A copy of the Prison Rules was not available*

3.44 All cells have notices containing information about contacting lawyers, family visits, the VC, etc. on the back of the door. These do not give any information for 'legalised prisoners' on how to complain or how to access a copy of the Prison Rules.

Visits Arrangements

3.45 Prisoners cannot access telephones but contact with relatives or legal representatives can be made on a prisoner's behalf by a member of staff. Visits are allowed within the suite, usually supervised in their cell. There is a suitable room for agents visits

Catering Arrangements

3.46 Catering arrangements are maintained through the local hospital. All cultural and religious needs and dietary needs are catered for. The food usually arrives in takeaway containers, which negates the need for washing facilities.

Medical Arrangements

3.47 There is a functional medical interview room within the cells area. Medical support is provided by a local Doctor. LPC prisoners are not usually kept very long so are not seen as a matter of course. However *if they are to be kept for more than a day they should see a Medical Practitioner within 24 hours*. In emergencies, individuals will be escorted to the local hospital. Verified medication that has been prescribed by a Doctor is given to prisoners by custody officers. Up to now there have been no methadone prescriptions for prisoners in the police cells, so if this were to happen a suitable protocol would have to be put into place.

Visiting Committee

3.48 The Visiting Committee carries out monthly inspections and holds four meetings a year. They have created a checklist that is filled in and signed whenever one of them visits. This is an area of **good practice**. A record of their visits is also logged in a 'VC book.'

Additional Information

3.49 Fire evacuation procedures are sound with initial evacuation utilising handcuffs and gathering in the discrete area that is used for disembarking/collecting prisoners. There are vehicles available in the police car park should further, secure, arrangements be needed for a longer-term evacuation.

3.50 Physically disabled prisoners are adequately catered for as all of the facilities are on the ground floor.

3.51 Matters of Concern

- Toilets in cells are not screened (paragraph 3.35).
- There is no opportunity for exercise in the fresh air (paragraph 3.42).
- A copy of the Prison Rules was not available (paragraph 3.43).
- If 'legalised' prisoners are to be kept for more than a day they should see a Medical Practitioner within 24 hours (paragraph 3.47).

3.52 Items of Good Practice

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception (paragraph 3.30).
- There are extremely good relationships between all agencies (paragraph 3.31).
- The Visiting Committee routinely uses a checklist created by members when they are inspecting (paragraph 3.48).

Conclusions

3.53 Kirkwall cells regularly hold LPC prisoners. The cells area was clean and well maintained. Procedures were in place to ensure that any prisoner who is admitted will be safe and treated with dignity. Relationships between all parties seem to be extremely positive judging by the interactions that were observed by inspectors.

Lerwick – 30th August 2011

Introduction and Background

3.54 The Legalised Police Cells at Lerwick were last inspected on 19th March 2008. Six matters of concern were raised at that time:

- The absence of any cell furniture.
- Open, unscreened, toilets in cells.
- The absence of any opportunity to exercise in the open air.
- Badly stained toilets.
- No notices describing how to access the Visiting Committee (VC) or the Prisons Complaints Commissioner.
- A copy of the Koran and a prayer mat were not available.

3.55 Concern still remains about the first three of these; nothing has changed since the last inspection. On the fourth the toilets are no longer stained. However they were clean and serviceable *although still not screened*. There is now a notice explaining about access to the VC. A Prayer Mat and a copy of the Koran and Bible were available. There is a language identification poster and telephone interpreting services can be accessed when required.

In Attendance

3.56 The inspector was accompanied on the inspection by Sergeant Brown and Councillor Mrs Grains from the VC. There were no prisoners being held in the cells.

Reception

3.57 The process for receiving prisoners into the LPCs is good. The prisoner is handcuffed from court and led into the next building which houses the cells. This route is through a public area but there are not usually any difficulties experienced with this. The court room is up some stairs which could cause problems for people with mobility problems. In these cases, because there is no lift, the court hearing would take place in the cells, which are on the ground floor.

3.58 Suicide Risk Management procedures are good with a Northern Constabulary questionnaire being used for every reception. This determines the level of risk for each individual and either the officer in charge of the shift or if necessary the Doctor will make a decision about observation protocols for each individual. This is an area of **good practice**. The police have a running log called an 'Apprehension Review' on which every observation is recorded. This then forms part of the handover on shift changes. As part of the reception procedure prisoners are asked if they wish to have contact with a drug or alcohol worker. These requests are actioned immediately if they are asked for.

3.59 Police officers are not specially trained for custody work but on investigation it is apparent that most of the skills required are covered in their core training. The most senior officer on duty is usually responsible for custodies.

Cells and Facilities

3.60 There are six Legalised Police Cells: five for male prisoners and one for females. Males and females are kept separate by a grille gate. There is an extra 'observation' cell and one of the other cells is covered by CCTV (for vulnerable prisoners). The images are monitored behind the charge desk and the police 'writing room' office. The cells were reasonably clean but did have a small amount of graffiti in them. They all had windows but there were no ligature points as the windows were sealed. Ventilation and heating is good.

3.61 *There is no furniture in the cells*, however there is a mattress and clean bedding is always supplied. Clean towels and various other items such as toiletries are supplied from their own store. Laundry is taken care of by the cleaner who uses a local laundrette.

3.62 There is a separate shower room for men and one for women, access to water for washing is also in these rooms. An effective cell buzzer system alerts the staff to any issues. The sound is relayed to the sergeant's room and desk area.

3.63 Cell occupancy since the last inspection was as follows:

| | Total |
|----------------|--------------|
| 2008 | 48 |
| 2009 | 63 |
| 2010 | 42 |
| 2011 (to date) | 88 |

3.64 The computer system at Lerwick is unable to distinguish how many prisoners are male and female. However, the figure for females was estimated to be around five a year.

Access to Exercise

3.65 *There is no access to time in the fresh air.*

Information

3.66 A copy of the Prison Rules was available, but no copies of complaints forms were available. *There was no information about the VC or how to access it.*

Visits Arrangements

3.67 The police always allow access to agents and also a family visit when this is possible. The interview room for solicitors visits is not screened but is adequate. Other visitors usually see prisoners in their cell with a police officer present.

Catering Arrangements

3.68 Meals are provided by the Gilbert Bain Hospital in Lerwick. All dietary needs can be met. Hot drinks and access to water is available on a regular basis. Reading material such as magazines is also available.

Medical Arrangements

3.69 There is access to a Doctor as and when this is required. A rota system for police surgeons is in operation. There is an adequate medical room in the cells area. Medication is issued by the custody officers. Methadone is dispensed by a Doctor if this has been prescribed.

Visiting Committee

3.70 The Visiting Committee meets three times a year and a good record is kept of these meetings. A member also visits every month. A book is used to record these visits and they always talk to prison custodies. They use a checklist to verify that everything is in order. This is an area of **good practice**. Senior police officers are responsive if there are any shortcomings highlighted to them.

Additional Information

3.71 Escort staff run the police cells between 07.00 hrs and 19.00 hrs whenever there are custodies present. The night shift is covered by the police. The main way onto the island is by air, and the only time this is not possible is when there are adverse weather conditions. In such circumstances the overnight ferry may be used. Travel difficulties are the main reasons for prison custodies being held overnight. Another reason is that prisoners from Aberdeen generally fly up the night before a hearing, spend the night in a cell and fly back after the hearing the next day.

3.72 Fire evacuations take place whenever the court building next door has one (usually every six months). There are three escape routes to the police yard. Usually custodies would be handcuffed and held in either escort or police vehicles. The last practice evacuation was held on 19 May 2011.

3.73 Overall the facilities at Lerwick are adequate whilst the arrangements for caring for prisoners are very good.

3.74 Matters of Concern

- The toilets in cells are unscreened (paragraph 3.55).
- There is no furniture in the cells (paragraph 3.61).
- There is no opportunity to exercise in the fresh air (paragraph 3.65).
- There was no information about the VC or how to access it (paragraph 3.66).

3.75 Items of Good Practice

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception (paragraph 3.58).
- The Visiting Committee routinely use a checklist created by members when they are inspecting. (paragraph 3.70).
- There are good relationships between court, police and escort staff. (paragraph 3.76).

Conclusions

3.76 Arrangements for the running of the police cells and the adjacent court are a good example of how different agencies who work together can ensure that the operation runs smoothly. All parties indicated that relationships were good. This was evident in all of the observations made during this and the additional inspection of the sheriff court. This is an area of **good practice**.

Lochmaddy – 30 August 2011

Introduction and Background

3.77 The Legalised Police Cells were last inspected on 18 March 2008. Seven matters of concern were raised at that time and are still areas of concern:

- *Record keeping was not detailed enough to determine if any prisoners being held were females.*
- *Prisoners had to leave their cells to wash their hands after using the toilet.*
- *There were no notices available in foreign languages.*
- *There was no information available on how to contact the Visiting Committee or make a complaint.*
- *It was not possible to determine when the Visiting Committee had last visited.*
- *A copy of the Koran and a Prayer Mat were not available.*

3.78 The only progress made since the last inspection has been that 'Language Line' is now available and information is available on how to make a complaint through the police process. Otherwise, these remain areas of concern.

In attendance

3.79 The Inspectorate was accompanied by PC Craig Rose.

Reception

3.80 Prisoners are checked for vulnerability on reception. This is an area of **good practice**.

Cells and Facilities

3.81 There are three Legalised Police Cells. Two cells for males are separated from the main corridor by a grille gate. One cell for women is separated from the male cells and is also off the main corridor behind a grille gate. The cells are covered by CCTV.

3.82 The cells have not been used since the last inspection.

3.83 Each cell has a fully functioning call system. Prisoners sleep on a mattress on a raised concrete plinth. The cells were clean and in good decorative order. Each of the cells has a toilet, although prisoners have to go to the shower area to wash their hands. The shower is for use by both male and female prisoners.

3.84 *A Prayer Mat and a copy of the Koran and Bible were not available.*

3.85 The police station has appropriate disabled access and facilities.

Access to Exercise

3.86 There is a clean, enclosed exercise area adjacent to cells. There is no CCTV coverage and the area would require to be supervised if in use.

Information

3.87 A notice informing prisoners how to contact a solicitor, a doctor and their family was the only information available.

Visits Arrangements

3.88 An interview room is available within the building which can be used for visits between prisoners and their families and legal agents. The room is not secure and a risk assessment would need to be carried out prior to any visit taking place. If the risk is too great to allow the visit to take place in this room, arrangements can be made for the visit to take place in the cell or through the open hatch in the cell door.

Catering Arrangements

3.89 Ready meals are supplied by an authorised Police supplier and are micro waved as required. A water cooler is in place and there are facilities to make hot drinks.

3.90 Paper crockery and plastic cutlery are used.

3.91 Special dietary requirements are provided by a local hotel.

Medical Arrangements

3.92 The local medical practice is located next door to the police station and can be used if required. If the local doctor is not available, call out arrangements with the medical provider MEDACS are in place. All medication is administered by the doctor, and consultations take place in cell. No record of visits by a doctor were available.

3.93 In an emergency, an ambulance would be called and the prisoner taken to the nearest hospital in Benbecula 18 miles away.

Suicide Risk Management

3.94 Appropriate risk assessment and cell sharing assessment processes are in place. There are ligature points in all of the cells, although these are limited. An adequate supply of anti-ligature clothing and bedding is available.

Visiting Committee

3.95 There was no evidence of attendance by, or contact with, the Visiting Committee.

Additional Information

3.96 The required fire evacuation procedures and associated instructions were in place. The fire alarms had been tested on 22 August 2011, although there was no evidence of fire drills available.

3.97 Matters of Concern

- Record keeping was not detailed enough to determine if any prisoners being held were females (paragraph 3.77).
- Prisoners had to leave their cells to wash their hands after using the toilet (paragraph 3.77).
- There were no notices available in foreign languages (paragraph 3.77).
- There was no information available on how to contact the Visiting Committee or make a complaint (paragraph 3.77).
- It was not possible to determine when the Visiting Committee had last visited (paragraph 3.77).
- A copy of the Koran and a Prayer Mat were not available (paragraph 3.77).

3.98 Items of Good Practice

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception (paragraph 3.80).

Conclusions

3.99 The legalised police cells are clean and well maintained. However, the station is only staffed on a part-time basis and its cells are used for police custodies on a very limited basis and have not been used for prison custodies since the last inspection in 2008.

It is recommended that the Legalised Police cells at Lochmaddy are discontinued.

Stornoway – 13 September 2011

Introduction and Background

3.100 The Legalised Police Cells at Stornoway were last inspected on 19 March 2008. At that time there were four matters of concern raised. None had been rectified before this inspection but some improvements were made during and after the visit.

In Attendance

3.101 The Inspectorate on this occasion comprised of the Inspector of Prisons. He was accompanied by Acting Inspector Morrison, Sergeant Murray and VC convenor Derek McKay.

Reception

3.102 Prisoners disembark in a semi secure yard at the back of the police station. There are gates that can be secured if necessary. Prisoners are double handcuffed and walk straight into the cells area. Everything is on the ground floor so disabled access is not an issue.

3.103 Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception using a template created by Northern Constabulary. This is an area of **good practice**. Custody officers are well trained in the care of prisoners in need of support and record observations on the police observation sheets. Personal Escort Record (PER) forms are also used to inform escort providers about any issues.

3.104 For prisoners who do not speak English as their first language there is a language identification notice and access to “Language Line” for immediate interpretation needs. There is also a list of interpreters available if required. Logistics dictate the availability but there is a good provision maintained.

3.105 Prisoners’ property and cash is checked on reception, sealed and then held in a cupboard in the police desk.

Cells and Facilities

3.106 Since the last inspection the LPCs have been used occasionally for holding prisoners under the Prison Rules. Unfortunately it was not possible to produce occupancy figures as the police at Stornoway were unable to interrogate the computer to present them to the inspector.

3.107 There are seven Legalised Police Cells: five for male prisoners and two for females. They are located in two separate corridors. This suite of cells is also used for police custodies. The cells have been built since the last inspection and are only two years old. All of the cells were clean and well maintained but did have some graffiti in them.

3.108 All cells have a plinth on which the mattress is placed. Each cell has sunlight panels made up of small squares of hardened glass. There are no windows but there is a ventilation system in place. This provides cool air in the summer and adequate heating in the winter. There are no ligature points in the cells. There is also an unfurnished observation cell. All cells have CCTV which is monitored in the police operations room.

3.109 *Each cell has a stainless steel WC, which is not screened, and a small sink for hand washing. Soap and hand towels are supplied on request. No cell furniture is available.* The CCTV does not view the toilet area.

3.110 There is no electric power in the cells and fresh drinking water has to be supplied from the police kitchen along the corridor.

3.111 The cell call alarm system is in good working order. There is an audible buzzer to alert staff to the fact that a prisoner needs assistance. The call system is relayed to a panel located in the office in the cells area. There is also a staff alarm system operated through electronic wall strips along the cells corridor.

3.112 There are two shower rooms, one in each section. The rooms are identical and have a vandal proof shower. Both areas have a half length door and were clean and well maintained.

3.113 All custody staff have been trained to carry out assessments and management of individuals at risk of self-harm or suicide.

3.114 In a well stocked store room there is a supply of toiletries, clean bedding, books and magazines. Laundry is washed at the local hospital.

3.115 A Prayer Mat, and a copy of the Koran and Bible were available.

3.116 Disabled prisoners are adequately catered for as all of the facilities are on the ground floor

Access to Exercise

3.117 *There is no area for access to open air.*

Information

3.118 All cells have notices containing information about contacting lawyers and other police custody matters. *These do not give any information on how to complain or how to access a copy of the Prison Rules.*

3.119 *An up to date copy of the Prison Rules was not available.*

Visits Arrangements

3.120 There is no access to telephones for prisoners but contact with relatives or legal representatives can be made on a prisoner's behalf by a member of staff. There are visits allowed within the suite, usually supervised in their cell. There is a suitable room for agents visits.

Catering Arrangements

3.121 Catering arrangements are provided mainly through the escort provider's microwave meals. For longer stays the local hospital provides meals. All cultural and religious needs and dietary needs are catered for. The food from the hospital usually arrives in takeaway containers, and disposable cutlery is used. This negates the need for washing facilities.

Medical Arrangements

3.122 Within the area there is a medical interview room. Medical support is provided by a local Doctor. LPC prisoners are not usually kept very long so are not seen as a matter of course. *However if they are to be kept for more than a day they should see a Medical Practitioner within 24 hours.* In emergencies, individuals will be escorted to the local hospital. Verified medication prescribed by a Doctor is given to prisoners by custody officers. Methadone prescriptions for prisoners in the police cells are dispensed by a Doctor. There are three local Doctors who work on a rota system to provide cover.

Visiting Committee

3.123 *The Visiting Committee has not been adequately formed since the last inspection. This was also a matter of concern at that time. There had been no monthly inspections or the required four meetings a year.*

Additional Information

3.124 Fire evacuation procedures are sound with initial evacuation utilising handcuffs and gathering in the discrete area that is used for disembarking/collecting prisoners. There are vehicles available in the police car park should further, secure, arrangements be needed for a longer-term evacuation.

3.125 Matters of Concern

- Toilets in cells are not screened (paragraph 3.109).
- There is no cell furniture available (paragraph 3.109).
- There is no opportunity for access to fresh air (paragraph 3.117).
- There were no complaints forms or notices explaining how to complain (paragraph 3.118).

- An up to date copy of the Prison Rules was not available (paragraph 3.119).
- If 'legalised' prisoners are to be kept for more than a day they should see a Medical Practitioner within 24 hours (paragraph 3.122).
- The Visiting Committee has not been formed adequately since the last inspection. There had been no monthly inspections or the required four meetings a year. (paragraph 3.123).

3.126 **Items of Good Practice**

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception (paragraph 3.103).
- Relationships between all parties seem to be positive (paragraph 3.127).

Conclusions

3.127 The cells area was clean and well maintained. Procedures were in place to ensure that any prisoner who is admitted will be safe and treated with dignity. Relationships between all parties seem to be positive judging by the interactions that were observed by inspector. This is an area of **good practice**. However, a major drawback was that the VC were not formed or carrying out any inspection visits.

Thurso - 2 June 2011

Introduction and Background

3.128 The Legalised Police Cells at Thurso were last inspected on 25th July 2007. At that time there were three matters of concern raised. All have been rectified.

3.129 There were strong feelings, expressed before and during the inspection, that Thurso police cells should no longer be legalised. There has been no difficulty in transporting prisoners to Inverness prison despite the distance (over 100 miles) and the two extremely bad winters of 2009-10 and 2010-11.

In Attendance

3.130 The Inspectorate on this occasion comprised of the Inspector of Prisons. He was accompanied by Chief Inspector Reiss, Area Commander of the Caithness and Sutherland Police Division. The Chief Inspector of Prisons also made an informal visit the following day.

Reception

3.131 Disembarkation takes place just outside the cells area. Prisoners are handcuffed and walked a few yards to enter the cells area.

3.132 On arrival, prisoners would be assessed for vulnerability using a template created by the Northern Constabulary. This is an area of **good practice**. Custody officers are well trained in the care of vulnerable prisoners and record observations on the police observation sheets. Personal Escort Record (PER) forms are also used to inform escort providers about any issues.

3.133 For prisoners who do not speak English as their first language there is a language identification notice and access to "Global Interpretation Service." This presents some logistical difficulty as most interpreters have to travel from Inverness.

3.134 Prisoners' property and cash is checked on reception, sealed and then held in lockers in a store room next to the police desk.

Cells and Facilities

3.135 There are eight Legalised Police Cells for male prisoners and two for females. Five of the male cells are operational but three are now used for storage. The male cells are all located in a corridor and are used regularly for police custodies.

3.136 The female cells are separated by a grill gate and are to the side of the main cell corridor. These two cells are also used for police custodies. All the cells are clean, well maintained and have very little graffiti in them. All cells have a plinth on which a mattress is placed. Each cell has a sunlight panel made up of small hardened glass squares. There are no windows. There is a good ventilation system which keeps the cells cool in the summer. It was 21°C on the day of the

inspection but the temperature was comfortable in the cells. A ceiling heater panel in each cell provides adequate heating in the winter.

3.137 Each cell has a steel WC *but this is not screened*. There is no hand washing facility in the cells. Fresh drinking water is not available in the cells but prisoners can access drinking water through a request to staff. This is also the case with hand washing. No cell furniture is available. The cells are all free of ligature points but there are 'bulk head' lights installed which could be accessed by a determined prisoner. They have been in place for a number of years but have never been an issue.

3.138 There is no electric power in the cells.

3.139 There is CCTV coverage in the cells corridor and in one of the male cells. This is used to monitor vulnerable prisoners. CCTV footage is monitored in the control desk area.

3.140 The cell call alarm system is in good working order. There is an audible buzzer to alert staff to a prisoner in need of assistance. The call system is relayed to a panel located near the police desk in the cells area.

3.141 There are two shower rooms, one in each section. The rooms are identical with a shower area and a wash hand basin. Prisoners can access these hand washing facilities by asking a member of staff. Both showers have a full length door and were clean and well maintained.

3.142 There are dedicated Prisoner Custody Officers who have had training in food handling, IT, officer security and first aid. These are usually only used for police custodies but would be used for 'legalised' prisoners should there be any.

3.143 In a well stocked store room there is an adequate supply of clean bedding and clothes, books and magazines. A Prayer Mat, and a copy of the Koran and Bible are also available.

Access to Exercise

3.144 A very small exercise area is located at the end of the custody corridor. The yard is overgrown with weeds, an obvious sign that it has not been used by 'legalised' prisoners for a number of years. It would require staff supervision at all times if it was to be used.

Information

3.145 *A copy of the Prison Rules was not available.*

3.146 There have been no convicted or remand prisoners held within the legalised cells since the escorting of prisoners was contracted out in 2006. Prior to 2006 they were used regularly. This lack of use has resulted in some notices and forms (ie complaints forms) being out of date.

3.147 All cells have notices containing information about contacting lawyers etc on the back of the door. However, they do not give any information for 'legalised prisoners' on how to complain, how to access a copy of the Prison Rules and request to see the VC. *These notices should be updated.*

Visits Arrangements

3.148 Contact with relatives or legal representatives can be made on a prisoner's behalf by a member of staff. There is no visits room within the area but agents visits could take place in the police interview room. As the LPC occupancy rate has remained at zero for several years there is no experience of conducting family visits but inspectors were informed about arrangements that could be made to facilitate this.

3.149 There is no prisoner access to telephones.

Catering Arrangements

3.150 Catering arrangements are maintained through a local hotel. All cultural and religious needs are catered for. The food usually arrives in takeaway containers with disposable cutlery, this negates the need for washing facilities. All dietary needs can be met.

Medical Arrangements

3.151 Within the area there is a functional medical interview room. Medical support is provided by a local Doctor courtesy of a MEDACS contract. All LPC prisoners would be seen within 24 hours. In emergencies individuals would be transferred to a hospital nearby. Only medication prescribed by the doctor is given to prisoners. If methadone was to be administered this would be dispensed by the Doctor.

Visiting Committee

3.152 The VC no longer carry out inspections, write annual reports or have quarterly meetings. They did not attend this inspection but made their view clear prior to the visit taking place that they did not see the value in keeping the LPCs at Thurso. Police and escort staff expressed the same view.

Additional Information

3.153 Fire evacuation procedures are sound with initial evacuation utilising handcuffs and gathering in the discrete area that is used for disembarking/collecting prisoners. There are vehicles available in the police car park should further, secure, arrangements be needed for a longer-term evacuation. Wick police station would be used for longer term evacuation.

3.154 Disabled prisoners are adequately catered for, as all facilities are on the ground floor.

3.155 **Matters of Concern**

- Toilets in cells are not screened (paragraph 3.137).
- A copy of the Prison Rules should be available (paragraph 3.145).
- Notices on the back of cell doors are out of date (paragraph 3.147).

3.156 **Items of Good Practice**

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception (paragraph 3.132).

Conclusions

3.157 Thurso LPCs have not held any prisoners for a long time but often hold police custodies. The cells area was clean and well maintained. Procedures were in place to ensure that any LPC prisoner would be safe and treated with dignity.

It is recommended that the Legalised Police Cells at Thurso are discontinued.

Strathclyde Police

Campbeltown – 5 July 2011

Introduction and Background

3.158 The Legalised Police Cells at Campbeltown were last inspected on 9th July 2007. Although the cells were in an old building there was only one matter of concern raised. A new police station was built in 2009 so this is the first inspection of this building.

3.159 There have been no prisoners held within the legalised cells since the escorting of prisoners was contracted out in 2006. Prior to 2006 they were used regularly. This lack of use has resulted in some notices and forms (ie complaints forms) being out of date.

In Attendance

3.160 The Inspectorate on this occasion comprised of the Inspector of Prisons who was met by the full Visiting Committee, Mrs Soudan, Mr Page, Mrs Gardiner and Mr Milligan. He was accompanied on this inspection by Chief Inspector Bailey, Sergeant McLaren and Mrs Soudan. All parties expressed concern about continuing LPCs that are no longer used. The VC is no longer financed adequately to hold four meetings a year but continue to make monthly inspections, which seems pointless when there are no 'legalised' prisoners being held.

Reception

3.161 Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception using a template created by Strathclyde police. This is an area of **good practice**. Custody officers are well trained in the care of prisoners in need of support and record observations on the police observation sheets. Personal Escort Record (PER) forms are also used to inform escort providers about any issues.

3.162 All prisoners receive information about contacting lawyers etc. when they come into the custody suite. 'Legalised prisoners' would be given information on how to complain, how to access a copy of the Prison Rules and the request to see the VC.

3.163 For prisoners who do not speak English as their first language there is a language identification notice and access to "Language Line" for immediate interpretation needs. There is also a list of interpreters available if required.

3.164 Prisoners' property and cash is checked on reception, sealed and then held in secure lockers in a separate store room.

Cells and Facilities

3.165 There are two Legalised Police Cells, one for male prisoners and one for females. They are located in separate areas, Both are included in suites of cells

that are used for police custodies and there was some confusion expressed as to which cells were actually 'legalised.' All cells are clean, well maintained and had no graffiti in them. All have a small plinth on which the mattress is placed. Each cell lets in sunlight through a panel made up of small hardened glass squares. There are no windows. There is a ventilation system which provides adequate heating in the winter and keeps the cells cool in the summer.

3.166 *Each cell has a steel WC, but this is not screened.* There is also a hand washing facility in the cells but prisoners have to ask for soap and a towel. Fresh drinking water is not available in the cells but prisoners have access to drinking water through a request to staff who get it from suitable taps in the kitchen. No cell furniture is available. The cells are both free of ligature points.

3.167 There is no electric power in the cells.

3.168 There is CCTV coverage in all parts of the cells area but each camera is turned off when it is not appropriate to have it on. This was demonstrated to the inspector during the visit. This is an area of **good practice** as it allows for monitoring of vulnerable prisoners but at the same time does not infringe on the privacy of the majority of prisoners who sleep in the cells. CCTV is monitored in the control office.

3.169 The cell call alarm system is in good working order. There is an audible buzzer to alert staff to the fact that a prisoner is in need of assistance. The call system is relayed to a panel located in the office in the cells area.

3.170 There are two shower rooms, one in each section. The rooms are identical with a shower area and a wash hand basin. Both areas have a full length door and are clean and well maintained.

3.171 There are dedicated Police Custody Officers who have received training in food handling, IT, officer security and first aid. When custodies are being held in the cells it is usual practice to assign a police custody officer to the suite.

3.172 All staff on duty were knowledgeable about the assessment and management of individuals at risk of self-harm or suicide.

3.173 There is an adequate supply of toiletries, clean towels, bedding and clothes, books and magazines. These items are kept in a store room adjacent to the cells area. There are good laundry arrangements in place. A Prayer Mat was available, *however there was no Koran or Bible.*

Access to Exercise

3.174 A secure exercise area is located at the end of both custody areas. The yard is clean and covered with mesh and has all round CCTV coverage. This would allow access to the open air without requiring staff supervision. Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure access to fresh air is facilitated to prisoners being held under the Prison Rules however due to the absence of any occupancy this has not been carried out for several years.

Information

3.175 A copy of the Prison Rules is available.

3.176 *There was no information about how to contact the VC or how to complain. Complaints forms were not available.*

Visits Arrangements

3.177 There is no prisoner access to telephones but contact with relatives or legal representatives can be made on a prisoner's behalf by a member of staff. There is a suitable interview room within the area. This is screened and is suitable for unsupervised visits from both family members and solicitors. As the LPC occupancy rate has remained at zero for several years there is no experience of conducting family visits but inspectors were informed about arrangements that could be made to facilitate this.

Catering Arrangements

3.178 Catering arrangements are maintained through a local hotel. All dietary, cultural and religious needs are catered for. The food is usually served on plastic plates, cutlery is plastic as is the cups used for drinks. There is a kitchen area to wash these utensils, which is also used by police custodies.

Medical Arrangements

3.179 Within the cells area there is a fully equipped medical room. Medical support is provided by local Doctors from Campbeltown hospital. Arrangements are in place for all LPC prisoners to be seen within 24 hours of reception. In extreme emergencies individuals will be transferred to the hospital which is nearby.

3.180 Only medication prescribed by the Doctor is given to prisoners and then only when it is packed in single doses. If methadone is to be administered this is done by the Doctor.

Visiting Committee

3.181 The Visiting Committee attend for monthly inspections and hold three meetings a year. They have created a checklist that is filled in and signed whenever a member them visits. This is an area of **good practice**.

3.182 The effort that goes into publishing an Annual Report and carrying out inspections is evidently time consuming judging by the high quality of work witnessed by the inspector. As mentioned in their Annual Report a review of the situation for LPCs that are not used is overdue.

Additional Information

3.183 Fire evacuation procedures are sound with initial evacuation utilising handcuffs and gathering in the discrete area that is used for disembarking/collecting prisoners. It would be possible to take a risk assessed decision to evacuate to the exercised area as this is secure. There are vehicles available in the police car park should further, secure, arrangements be needed for a longer-term evacuation. A fire drill was conducted three weeks before the inspection.

3.184 Disabled prisoners are adequately catered for as all of the facilities are on the ground floor and there is a 'disabled' cell.

3.185 Matters of Concern

- Toilets in cells are not screened (paragraph 3.166).
- A copy of the Koran and Bible were not available (paragraph 3.173).
- There was no information about how to contact the VC or how to complain. There were no complaints forms (paragraph 3.176).

3.186 Items of Good Practice

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception (paragraph 3.161)
- The arrangements for privacy with regards to CCTV (paragraph 3.168)
- The Visiting Committee routinely use a checklist created by members when they are inspecting. (paragraph 3.181)

Conclusions

3.187 Campbeltown has had no LPC prisoners for a long time but often houses police custodies. The cells area was clean and well maintained. It is the best designed suite observed during this inspection. Procedures were in place to ensure that any prisoner who is admitted will be safe and treated with dignity. Relationships between all parties seem to be positive judging by the interactions that were observed by the inspector.

It is recommended that the Legalised Police Cells at Campbeltown are discontinued.

Dunoon – 12 May 2011

Introduction and Background

3.188 The Legalised Police Cells at Dunoon were last inspected on 27 July 2007. On that occasion, five matters of concern were recorded. All except one have been addressed. The outstanding matter is described in paragraph 3.197.

In Attendance

3.189 The Inspectorate on this occasion comprised of the Deputy Chief Inspector. In attendance were Chief Inspector Andrew Mosley, Custody Officer Mark McAleese and Seamus Ferguson, Tom Irvine, Isobel Soudan and Sandy McPherson from the Visiting Committee.

Reception

3.190 Robust procedures for the identification, location, supervision and treatment of those assessed on admission as being at risk from self harm or suicide are in place. This is an area of **good practice**.

Cells and Facilities

3.191 The cellular area has 10 cells, two of which are separated by a grille gate and are designated as female only accommodation. Both areas have their own showering facilities. Of the remaining eight cells, one is designated as a Firearms Store and is secured by a separate suite of keys and, on the day of the inspection, one other cell was out of use due to faulty lighting. In addition, a detention cells is located out with the main cellular area, directly adjacent to the charge bar.

3.192 The use of these cells as Legalised Police Cells has diminished over the last few years and since the contracting out of prisoner escorting services in 2006, they have not been used for that purpose at all.

3.193 All cells have a working call facility in place. Prisoners are observed regularly through hatches in the cell doors and in the case of the detention cell, through an observation window. No close circuit television cameras are in place in the cellular area. There did not appear to be any ligature points within the cells.

3.194 Appropriate fire evacuation procedures are in place. Prisoners would be handcuffed and taken to an immediate point of evacuation within the Police car park. Should it be necessary, Police vehicles within the car park are available for more prolonged periods of evacuation. A record of the most recent fire drill which took place in April 2011 was examined and found to be in order.

3.195 All cells are of a similar size and design. They were found to be clean and had adequate heating, lighting and ventilation. There were no windows, although the ceiling was made from heavy glass tiles which provided a degree of natural daylight. Cell floors had recently been painted although some of the more frequently used cells used showed evidence of graffiti.

3.196 No cell furniture was in place. A concrete plinth was built in with a mattress and bedding provided when occupied. Porcelain toilets were in all cells with the exception of the detention cell which had no sanitation at all. *There was ventilation near each of the toilets but no screening or hand washing facilities in any of the cells.*

3.197 Both the male and female shower areas were clean and compact, housing a shower with shower curtain, a wash hand basin and a mirror which is fixed to the wall. Prisoners are issued with their own towel before showering. *A communal hand towel was available in the shower area along with a bar of soap and a nailbrush. This is not good practice in relation to infection control. Hand driers or paper towels should be provided, nailbrushes removed and soap should be provided from a dispenser.* Supplies of toiletries were available in packs for male and female needs.

3.198 The female shower has a sliding door which, when closed, provides sufficient privacy for dressing and undressing. *No door is in place in the male shower area which means dressing and undressing can take place within full view of others. This matter was also raised in the last report..*

3.199 Laundering takes place at least twice a week and appropriate arrangements are in place with a local laundry. A store room for bedding, toiletries, crockery, cutlery and anti-ligature clothing was inspected and found to be clean, tidy and well stocked. A small selection of books including fiction and religious books were also kept within the store room. It was noted that care had been taken to appropriately store and handle a copy of the Koran and Prayer Mats.

3.200 Prisoners' property is safely stored after being checked and sealed on admission. All valuable property and monies are accounted for, recorded and securely stored.

3.201 Disabled access in the cell area causes no problem and recent renovations to the car park had negated the previous difficulties for wheelchair access and exit. The toilet and shower facilities for disabled prisoners are challenging.

Access to Exercise

3.202 A small enclosed area with a caged-style roof is available for prisoners to spend time in the fresh air. Security conditions however would necessitate the presence of a Police Officer before such activity could take place.

Information

3.203 There is no notice board located in the cellular area. However a notice, posted at the main charge bar and replicated in most of the cells, is drawn to the attention of all admissions. It describes arrangements for accessing writing materials, medical assistance, toilet facilities and food as well as providing information relating to visits from family, friends, legal representatives and the Visiting Committee. *There were no references to Prison Rules or how to access them or the Scottish Prison Service Complaints Procedures.* A telephone line with

access to interpretation services is also located at the charge bar where language identification material is also on display.

Visits Arrangements

3.204 As there is no interview room in the custody suite, visits take place in the detention cell or in an interview room outwith the custody after a safety risk assessment has been made taking account of the nature of the visit and the presenting behaviour of the prisoner. The risk assessment also informs both duration and frequency of visits, however a flexible approach is taken which is reasonable and caters for demand.

Catering Arrangements

3.205 Meal times are flexible but replicate those which one would expect in the community. All meals are provided by a local hotel and come pre-packed in disposable containers. All meals are eaten in-cell. Drinking water is provided on request. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the cleaning of cutlery and the provision of condiments. The menu is varied and, with notice, can cater for special dietary needs including those based on medical or religious grounds.

Medical Arrangements

3.206 Within the area there is a functional medical interview room. Medical support is provided by a local Doctor. All LPC prisoners are seen within 24 hours by the force Doctor. In extreme emergencies individuals will be transferred to Dunoon General Hospital nearby. Only medication prescribed by the Doctor is given to prisoners and then only when it is packed in single doses. If methadone requires to be administered this is done by the Doctor.

Visiting Committee

3.207 Examination of attendance records and copies of minutes from VC meetings provided evidence that they meet regularly in Dunoon Police Station. A checklist is completed every month by a member of the committee to ensure that prisoners in custody are being well treated and that standards are being maintained. This is an area of **good practice**. However, there have not been any custodies for a long time.

Additional Information

3.208 Local arrangements and relationships between the Police, VC, providers of healthcare, catering and escorting services appear to be good. There were some concerns raised both by the police and the VC about the perceived recent deterioration in the level of service provided by the escort provider, specifically relating to the late arrival of vehicles. The impact of such occurrences is perhaps greater in Dunoon where incoming and outgoing movement is dependent on ferry crossings.

3.209 Custody staff have regular access to training and development opportunities. All are given an induction and are required to retain competence in first aid.

Matters of Concern

3.210 Cells do not contain furniture (paragraph 3.196).

3.211 Toilets in cells should be screened (paragraph 3.196).

3.212 Hand washing facilities are not available in cells (paragraph 3.196).

3.213 Infection control issues in relation to communal towels, soap and nail brushes should be addressed. (paragraph 3.197).

3.214 Male prisoners dressing and undressing in the shower area should not be in full view of others. (paragraph 3.198).

3.215 Information on, and access to, the Prison Rules and the Scottish Prison Service Complaints Procedures should be made available. ([paragraph 3.203).

Items of Good Practice

3.216 Robust procedures for the identification, location, supervision and treatment of those assessed on admission as being at risk from self harm or suicide are in place. (paragraph 3.190).

3.217 A checklist is completed monthly by a member of the Visiting Committee to ensure that individuals in custody are being well treated and that standards are being maintained. (paragraph 3.207).

Conclusions

3.218 Although there were no prisoners held in the cells at the time of the inspection, the conditions and facilities which were examined were satisfactory. The overall impression is of a clean and well ordered custody suite where attention to safety and decency prevailed. However, the cells had not been used for a number of years.

It is recommended that the Legalised Police Cells at Dunoon are discontinued.

Oban – 8 July 2011

Introduction and Background

3.219 The Legalised Police Cells at Oban were last inspected on 13th February 2008. At that time there were four matters of concern raised. All have been rectified. The building is more than 100 years old but is still serviceable.

3.220 There have been no convicted or remand prisoners held within the legalised cells since the escorting of prisoners was contracted out in 2006. Prior to 2006 they were used on a regular basis. This lack of use has resulted in some notices and forms (ie complaints forms) being out of date.

3.221 There is a strong feeling amongst the police and VC members that Oban police cells should no longer be legalised.

In Attendance

3.222 The Inspectorate on this occasion comprised of the Inspector of Prisons. He had a meeting with the VC members Mr Macintyre, Mr Smyth, Mr Cameron and Mrs Soudan as well as Police Inspector McLeish. He was accompanied on the inspection by Inspector McLeish, two constables and Mrs Soudan.

Reception

3.223 Prisoners disembark from vehicles parked in a discrete yard which is between the court building and the police station. The cells are on the ground floor so access for prisoners with mobility problems is not an issue.

3.224 Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception using a template created by Strathclyde Police. This is an area of **good practice**. Custody officers are all well trained in the care of vulnerable prisoners and record observations on the police observation sheets. Personal Escort Record (PER) forms are also used to inform escort providers about any issues.

3.225 For prisoners who do not speak English as their first language there is a language identification notice and access to “Global Interpretation Service.” This presents some logistical difficulty as most interpreters have to travel from the central belt.

3.226 Prisoners’ property and cash are checked on reception, sealed and then held in lockers in a store room next to the police desk.

Cells and Facilities

3.227 There are seven ‘legalised’ cells: six for male prisoners and one for females. Two of the male cells and the female cell are also used on a temporary basis for the escort provider to service the two courts at Oban. It is hoped that purpose built cells will be available in the next financial year for this operation. The

cells are split between the ground floor and the first floor: it is the first floor cells that are used by the escort provider. All cells are available for use for police custodies.

3.228 The female cell is separated from the male cells by a grille gate but is in the same corridor as the male cells. Male and female prisoners share the same facilities. All of the cells were clean, and well maintained but did have some graffiti in them. *The cells should be redecorated.* All cells have a plinth on which a mattress is placed. Each cell has a window which is sealed. There is little artificial ventilation so the cells are not always cool in the summer. A ceiling heater panel in each cell provides adequate heating in the winter.

3.229 *Each cell has a porcelain WC but this is not screened.* There is no hand washing facility in the cells despite meals being eaten there. Fresh drinking water is not available in the cells but prisoners can access drinking water, and hand washing, through a request to staff. No cell furniture is available. The cells are all free of ligature points.

3.230 There is no electric power in the cells.

3.231 There is no CCTV coverage in the cells or corridor.

3.232 The cell call alarm system is in good working order. There is a buzzer to alert staff to a prisoner in need of assistance. The call system is relayed to a panel located in the police control room.

3.233 There is one shower room which is appropriately screened. Suitable arrangements are in place for supplying toiletries. Hand washing facilities can be accessed by asking a member of staff. *The shower is upstairs and it would not be possible for a disabled prisoner to use it.*

3.234 There are dedicated Prisoner Custody Officers who are trained in food handling, IT, officer security and first aid. These are usually only used for police custodies but would be used for 'legalised' prisoners should there be any.

3.235 In a well stocked store room there is an adequate supply of clean bedding and clothes, books and magazines. A Prayer Mat, and a copy of the Koran and Bible are also available.

Access to Exercise

3.236 There is no exercise area. There is a small insecure yard but the inspector was informed that this was taken out of commission many years ago, with permission from the SPS.

Information

3.237 There are notices containing information about contacting lawyers and requests to see the VC etc. *However there were no notices giving information on how to complain, or access a copy of the Prison Rules.*

3.238 A copy of the Prison Rules was not available but was accessed and printed off via the internet during the inspection.

Visits Arrangements

3.239 There is no prisoner access to telephones but contact with relatives or legal representatives can be made on a prisoner's behalf by a member of staff. There is no visits room within the area but agents visits could take place in an interview room. As the LPC occupancy rate has remained at zero for several years there is no experience of conducting family visits and there are no arrangements in place to facilitate these.

Catering Arrangements

3.240 Food is supplied by a local hotel. All cultural and religious needs are catered for. The food usually arrives in takeaway containers with disposable cutlery which negates the need for washing facilities. Medical, religious and dietary needs can be met.

Medical Arrangements

3.241 Within the cells area there is a functional medical interview room. Medical support is provided by a local Doctor via MEDACS contract. All LPC prisoners would be seen within 24 hours. In emergencies individuals would be transferred to the local hospital. Only medication prescribed by the Doctor is given to prisoners. If methadone was to be administered this would be dispensed by the Doctor.

Visiting Committee

3.242 The VC continues to inspect every month, write annual reports and have three meetings a year, even though no prisoners are ever held. The Visiting Committee routinely use a checklist created by VC members when they are inspecting. This is an area of **good practice**.

Additional Information

3.243 Although part of the police station is used to accommodate sheriff court custodies on a daily basis this does not hamper the operation of the custody suite in any way.

3.244 The relationships between the different agencies are cordial but not as proactive as in other LPCs (such as Kirkwall and Lerwick). A measure of this is the fact that escort staff do not look after the cells for the police at any point and their staff are not allowed to use any of the police facilities such as the kitchen for making hot drinks.

3.245 Fire evacuation procedures are sound with initial evacuation utilising handcuffs and gathering in the discrete area that is used for disembarking/collecting prisoners. There are vehicles available in the police car park should further, secure,

evacuation be needed for a longer term evacuation. The last fire practice took place in November 2010.

3.246 Matters of Concern

- The cells should be redecorated. (paragraph 3.228).
- Toilets in cells are not screened (paragraph 3.229).
- Facilities for disabled prisoners to shower should be in place (paragraph 3.233).
- There was no information on how to complain and no access to the Prison Rules (paragraph 3.237).

3.247 Items of Good Practice

- Prisoners are assessed for vulnerability on reception (paragraph 3.224).
- The Visiting Committee routinely uses a checklist created by members when they are inspecting. (paragraph 3.242).

Conclusions

3.248 Oban LPC has not held any LPC prisoners for a long time but often houses police custodies. Procedures were in place to ensure that any prisoner who is admitted will be safe and treated with dignity.

3.249 There has been no difficulty in transporting prisoners to prison despite the long distance (over 100 miles) and the two extremely bad winters of 2009-10 and 2010-11.

It is recommended that the police cells at Oban should be discontinued.

4. INSPECTION TEAM

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
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| Margaret Brown | Deputy Chief Inspector |
| Mick Armstrong | Inspector |



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Government**

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