



HMIPS

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

NEWS RELEASE
INSPECTION OF COURT CUSTODY PROVISION, ABERDEEN SHERIFF COURT
ON 17 DECEMBER 2018

Inspectors found the CCU to be a well-run facility with staff that were clearly motivated and working well as a team. Staff prisoner relationships were respectful, and the CCU staff and management had developed good relationships with partners in the building.

Staff maintained good levels of supervision and were highly visible and approachable; taking account of the varied needs of those they were responsible for.

The management and control of Personal Escort Records lacked timely due diligence, and cell allocation was completed prior to individual risk assessment interviews being completed on arrival.

To allow people to access their rights they need to know their rights, and if English is not their first language or they have limited communication skills it becomes challenging. Clear joint protocols are required to ensure that prisoners arriving at court fully understand why they are there, and the outcome of their court appearance. All parties concerned must develop a joint approach to ensure that procedures are in place for this to happen, and that the process is fully understood by all those involved.

Although the CCU lacked natural light, it was well lit and generally clean. However, it had significant and clearly historic graffiti on the doors, walls and ceilings. In addition, the toilets were unhygienic and require urgent refurbishment. Both these issues should be addressed.

Tensions occurred when prisoners were being removed from escort vans, and the ensuing queuing in a narrow corridor added unnecessary risk to the movement of prisoners. This was compounded by movement through public areas to access specific courts, although this was appropriately well planned and managed by the staff team.

The difficulties experienced in many Scottish CCUs with overcrowding, disability access and movement tensions, could be addressed through greater use of video-link courts and this should be actively considered and encouraged.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, was appointed in July 2018.
2. This report identifies what was found during the inspection on 17 December 2018.
3. On publication the report can be found at www.prisoninspectoratescotland.gov.uk
4. For further information please contact Kerry Love, Business Manager, at Kerry.Love@gov.scot or on 0131 244 8484.