



HMIPS

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

NEWS RELEASE

INSPECTION OF COURT CUSTODY PROVISION, KIRKCALDY SHERIFF COURT ON 9 JULY 2020

This report is part of a programme of liaison visits to Court Custody Units (CCUs) carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS) during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. The visits are being conducted under HMIPS' new, albeit temporary, [Liaison Visits Framework - Prison and Court Custody Units](#), published in April 2020. These liaison visit reports provide assurance to Ministers and the wider public that scrutiny of the treatment and conditions in which prisoners are held has been continued during the pandemic.

At the time of the visit, the CCU had agreed to permit double occupancy in five cells, with one smaller cell designated as single occupancy. Inspectors agreed that all cells within the CCU that were used for double occupancy were too small to hold two custodies and still maintain physical distancing. Therefore all cells should be single occupancy, with phased management of custodies.

There appeared to be a scheduling issue with the local Procurator Fiscal for custodies attending the CCU to allow the custody numbers to be staggered, ensuring better management of cell allocation within the CCU and achieving physical distancing. All key agencies should work together to improve the scheduling to aid phased management of custodies, coordinated by the CCU Team Manager.

At the time of the visit, not all staff were wearing face masks. The CCU was quite cramped and as such it was acknowledged that it was challenging to maintain physical distancing. This increased the importance of staff wearing masks.

The CCU was cleaned at the end of each day by SCTS contract cleaners. No additional cleaning processes had been put in place post COVID-19 to clean the general area, the toilets or handles and surfaces. Cells continued to be cleaned between custodies and CCU staff reported that cleaners arrived quickly when requested.

In respect of the movement of custodies from the CCU to the court. Inspectors were informed that a Handcuff Risk Assessment was always carried out, and if appropriate the current process, in response to COVID-19, was for custodies to be handcuffed to a staff member by a closet chain to try and maintain physical distancing. This was deemed by Inspectors to be good practice.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, was appointed in July 2018.
2. On publication the report can be found at www.prisonsinpectoratescotland.gov.uk
3. For further information please contact Kerry Love, Business Manager, at Kerry.Love@gov.scot or on 07939 980452.