



## **COVID-19 PANDEMIC EMERGENCY**

## **LIAISON VISITS – PRISONS AND COURT CUSTODY UNITS**

### **REPORT ON A LIAISON VISIT TO HMP CASTLE HUNTLY,**

**11 & 16 FEBRUARY 2021**

Inspecting and Monitoring

<https://www.prisonsinspectoratescotland.gov.uk/>

**DO NO HARM - STAY SAFE - TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

## Introduction

This report is part of a programme of liaison visits of prisons to be carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS) during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency and was conducted under HMIPS's [Liaison Visit Framework - Prison and Court Custody Units](#) published in February 2021.

## Background Information

The adapted inspection methodology incorporated into the design of the prison liaison visits, will contribute to the UK's response to its international obligations under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). OPCAT requires that all places of detention are visited regularly by independent bodies; known as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM); which monitor the treatment of and conditions for detention. HMIPS is one of several bodies making up the NPM in the UK.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland (HMCIPS) assesses the treatment and care of prisoners across the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) estate against a pre-defined set of Standards. These Standards are set out in the document [Standards for Inspecting and Monitoring Prisons in Scotland](#).

## Process

Prior to undertaking a liaison visit, HMIPS will undertake a risk assessment to determine both the selection of the prison to visit but also the priority areas or focus to discuss with the Governor-in-Charge (GIC). As these are two day visits, core elements of each of the nine Standards as set out in HMIPS's [Standards for Inspecting and Monitoring Prisons in Scotland](#) will be reflected in the COVID-19 commentary and are designed to provide information to prisoners, prison staff, and the wider community on the areas that have been looked at during the course of a liaison visit.

These liaison visit reports will also 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.

The findings of these liaison visits will be reported to the appropriate bodies for information and action and published on our website.

A full list of Action Points and Good Practice from this report can be found at Annex A; and Annex B lists all acronyms used in this report.



## REPORT ON A LIAISON VISIT TO HMP CASTLE HUNTLY

HMIPS Prison Liaison Visit report – V2 – 14.12.20

HMP Castle Huntly provides an important and distinctive function as the only open prison in Scotland. Following a robust risk management process and a period in closed conditions, offenders can progress to HMP Castle Huntly where the emphasis is on careful preparation for release. Activity focuses on enhanced personal responsibility, job readiness and positive citizenship with the aim of reducing the risk of reoffending and contributing to safer communities.

Based on the site of an historic building whose exact date of construction is uncertain it is generally agreed that HMP Castle Huntly was completed in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century and the three accommodation areas late in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The historic site is maintained by the SPS.

The GIC was clearly on top of his brief and identified both the pressures facing the establishment, the areas of good practice, and the priorities for the route map back to recovery. The prison also provided a comprehensive self-assessment against our liaison visits framework and noted progress against our previous inspections. HMIPS welcomed the significant efforts made by the GIC and his team to ensure HMP Castle Huntly ran as smoothly as possible despite the significant impact of the COVID-19 constraints.

From all the discussions the inspectors had with staff and prisoners, the most consistently identified negative impact of the pandemic has been the impact on community access, community-based employment and training, and home leave. In relation to progression and returning to the community this has severely limited face-to-face contact with family, friends, and support services. This in turn impacts on the development of key relationships for support on release. These issues are not unique to HMP Castle Huntly but their key role in progression, the assessment and management of risk is significant for successful transition and public protection.

The GIC was making every effort to maintain the strong relationships with the community that he and his team had built. With an operational capacity of 284 in three accommodation areas, the establishment is rarely at capacity but nonetheless finding meaningful and rehabilitative purposeful activity without the usual employment was a key focus. We welcomed the visibility of the senior management team (SMT) within the establishment and the evidence of good staff prisoner relationships. For all prisoners, the personal officer role at HMP Castle Huntly is a key source of support to access the services and support they may need on release.

Scrutiny is never without a downside and HMIPS was concerned with the infection control in the COVID-19 designated area and the cleaning materials used. We were pleased to see that this was taken seriously and a revisit identified that recommendations escalated during the visits were actioned.

In addition, to remain at the forefront of modern penology, we would like the SPS to seriously consider investment in the future of HMP Castle Huntly, either recognising the strong existing community relationships through substantial modernisation and refurbishment of the accommodation blocks, with development of single cell accommodation for the whole population, or investment in an alternative site.

HMIPS were pleased to be accompanied by our partners in the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland for this inspection, as well as our regular inspection partners from Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS).

## COVID-19 commentary

HMIPS takes a human rights based approach ensuring that people's rights are put at the very centre of policies and practices. The 15 quality indicators are summarised in the PANEL principles of Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality.

**Participation:** prisoners should be meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their lives.

The uniqueness of the regime and layout of the estate is unlike any other prison in Scotland. Restrictions across Scotland's prisons were brought in to manage COVID-19 and had limited the movement and interaction of those in their care, however HMP Castle Huntly was able to operate in a more open and engaging way within the grounds, maximising time out of cell. Nonetheless, the restrictions imposed at a national level by the Scottish Government had led to the cancellation of outside work placements and home visits, removing the main avenue for participation at HMP Castle Huntly. These restrictions had a real impact on those living at HMP Castle Huntly as engagement with families and testing in the community are important in evidencing reduced risk in readiness for parole and subsequent release and reintegration back into their communities. HMIPS commend both those that live and also those that work at HMP Castle Huntly in the way that these difficult times have been managed.

Prisoner Information and Action Committees (PIAC) continued to operate throughout the COVID-19 restrictions with the minutes being displayed in the Link Centre for all to see. The SMT acknowledged that there were challenges in getting prisoners to participate in these meetings and this was attributed partly to prisoners reporting that the SMT were highly visible and accessible on a daily basis so issues were able to be raised, discussed, and resolved quickly without the need to attend a PIAC.

At the time of the Liaison Visit, physical visits had been postponed and only allowed in exceptional circumstances with each request considered on a case-by-case basis. It is HMIPS's view that family visits should be readily available to every prisoner without requiring special dispensation. When physical visits did take place, there appeared to be a robust process in place to adhere to physical distancing. Numbers were limited to two adults and two children per visit. HMIPS appreciate that space at physical visits is at a premium, but it is the view of HMIPS that the number of children should not be limited and that parents with more than two children should not have to choose which child misses out on seeing their father. It was noted that uptake in virtual visits was lower than the allocated spaces. It would appear that while some prisoners used virtual visits regularly, using up their allocation quickly, others who were less engaged in the process did not, so spaces were available and not utilised.

"Email a Prisoner" had worked well for many years and was well used during the pandemic. Although prisoners at HMP Castle Huntly had 24 hour access to a communal prison phone, the introduction of mobile phones was considered a huge benefit, particularly around Christmastime, as they could talk to their family and friends from the privacy of their own rooms.

**Accountability:** there should be monitoring of how prisoners' rights are being affected as well as remedies when things go wrong.

It was very clear to the inspection team that HMP Castle Huntly considered the safety of those in their care and staff as paramount. The Local Coronavirus Response Group (LCRG) had ensured good communication of information; and COVID-19 related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Safe Systems of Work (SSOW) had been carried out and were accessible through SharePoint. A pandemic plan had been developed to deal with the local issues, and actions and a decision log were live documents discussed by the SMT regularly. Physical distancing was adhered to stringently, and inspectors observed staff remind prisoners of the correct use of masks.

Transfers into HMP Castle Huntly ceased in March 2020 and recommenced in August 2020. A prison-wide file review took place at this time and the progression process, including monitoring of home leave requests, had continued throughout the pandemic, despite community access being suspended. For example, Risk Management Teams (RMTs) continued to ensure prisoners' plans were up-to-date and there would be no backlog when community access was reinstated. The Prison Based Social Work team (PBSW) and psychological services have both been able to continue to work on site throughout the pandemic and were provided with the equipment they required to work effectively from home as part of a blended approach. Integrated Case Management (ICM) was fully functional after an initial reduction of scheduling, in line with national COVID-19 guidance. In July 2020, the prison resumed the completion of annual ICMs and pre-liberation ICMs have continued throughout the pandemic. PBSW have been fully consulted and have maintained full involvement in these meetings whilst adhering to COVID-19 restrictions. Community-based social workers have been able to attend these meetings remotely.

Following the sudden cancellation of home leave at Christmas, triggered by national lockdown restrictions, the establishment reacted quickly. Staff who had been allocated time off due to the planned decrease in prison numbers over the festive period volunteered to attend work to support the prisoners during this difficult time. The establishment worked hard to soften the blow of prisoners not going home, including allocating extra virtual visits where all prisoners were able to book a session on either Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, or Boxing Day with additional sessions being added.

**Non-discrimination and equality:** All forms of discrimination must be prohibited, prevented and eliminated. The needs of prisoners who face the biggest barriers to realising their rights should be prioritised.

Numbers of those that fall into the vulnerable or protected characteristics categories were low in HMP Castle Huntly. Accessible rooms are very limited but inspectors spoke to prisoners allocated to these rooms and were informed that they had been treated fairly and appreciated the access to a room more suited to their needs. It is HMIPS's view that no one should be disadvantaged from progression due to their physical and medical conditions and, as the numbers requiring support rises within

the closed estate from the ageing population there will be a need to increase the numbers of rooms at HMP Castle Huntly that can accommodate this cohort.

HMP Castle Huntly have a robust Equality & Diversity Strategy with good processes in place to deal with those prisoners requiring additional support as part of their protected characteristics. As a transfer prison, the staff are able to plan for their arrival and ensure all the necessary support is in place for their arrival. The translation line is easily accessible but not often required. Reported violence was very low in comparison to other prisons, with the Think Twice Strategy (Anti-bullying) being seen as effective. The number of prisoners needing to be managed under Talk to Me (TTM) was low. There was a good SOP in place allowing those requiring support during a crisis to be returned to closed conditions until such times as they were able to return. However, the holding cells are not suitable for holding someone on TTM, even for a short period, and need further investment.

The free movement of prisoners during unlock enabled equitable access to all areas. Mentors and listeners were easily accessible without having to request an appointment through a member of staff therefore encouraging engagement and ensuring confidentiality.

**Empowerment:** everyone should understand their rights, and be fully supported to take part in developing policy and practices which affect their lives.

Empowerment has been a challenge for prisons during the pandemic due to the COVID-19 restrictions. However, HMP Castle Huntly experienced a different environment where the prison is classed as one household bubble and therefore attendance at meetings between staff and prisoners was more easily facilitated. A way of gauging empowerment is through the complaints system. HMP Castle Huntly SMT were aware of a possible reluctance to complain for fear of retribution and were committed to providing a culture where that did not happen. It was encouraging that some prisoners did still feel able to use the complaints system. Inspectors viewed a selection of Prisoner Complaint Forms (PCFs), PCFs 1 and 2, and were satisfied that they had been dealt with satisfactorily.

Prisoners confirmed to the inspectors that they had been able to attend ICMs in person and the involvement of family through the Link Centre has also been re-established. Remote access to these meetings has been difficult but the inspection team were satisfied that the use of conference call facilities for family and video attendance for prison-based and community-based professionals took place.

Communication is also important to allow prisoners to make choices and within HMP Castle Huntly communication was found to be excellent. Moreover, the prison rules were readily available in the Link Centre.

**Legality:** approaches should be grounded in the legal rights that are set out in domestic and international laws.

In other liaison visits we have reported tensions between keeping those in the prisons safe from catching COVID-19 against the fundamental rights of prisoners set out by the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners ("Mandela

Rules”) and the [Statement of Principles](#) relating to the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic issued by the CPT of the Council of Europe. In contrast this was not the case at HMP Castle Huntly. Prisoners were able to experience approximately 10 hours per day out of cell, and apart from numbers checks, where practice is to restrict movement, they had free movement in and outside the living areas. No complaints were received on the lack of access to a lawyer. Access to legal representation was achieved in most cases via video links, with an allocated space in which a prisoner could speak to his legal representative confidentially. At the time of our visit, no prisoners were being managed under Rule 95(1); HMP Castle Huntly is clearly constrained by having no Separation and Reintegration Unit (SRU), but processes appeared to be robust and managed lawfully. Although the area in which those held for a short period of time until transfer was not deemed appropriate and in need of some investment, the management of the person’s rights was satisfactory with access to their legal entitlements intact.





## **1. COVID-19 commentary:**

To understand any issues surrounding staffing and prisoners from the GIC or SPOC that includes numbers of prisoners being isolated and SPS staff absent numbers and their impact (some of this information will be supplied by SPS HQ on a daily basis). We will look to establish if staff understand their roles and what is expected of them. Are staff updated on any changes and knowledgeable of the present position of the establishment. How is the prison managing COVID-19 restraints (including physical distancing and the impact of the increase in prisoner contact and how groups e.g. households or bubbles are managed. We will look at preventative measures being enacted, such as screening on admission, quarantine and liberation. How are the prison managing their recovery plan.

We will look at the communications/information that is in place regarding any changes to the regime, or other functions within the prison, for all relevant parties including prisoners, their families and other relevant agencies regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that all communications/information is in a format/language people can understand. **(Standard 8 – Organisational Effectiveness)**

## **Visit findings**

At the time of our visit no resident at HMP Castle Huntly had tested positive for COVID-19 and it was one of the last prison establishments in Scotland to record no positive cases amongst prisoners. Moreover throughout the pandemic only 18 people within their care had required to self-isolate. This is highly commendable, particularly as the open nature of the establishment, operating for much of the pandemic as one large household bubble, inevitably increased the risks around transmission and containment. Action had been taken to prepare an isolation and quarantine unit by re-purposing the Independent Living Unit (ILU).

HMP Castle Huntly provides ongoing COVID-19 education and updates through a television channel accessible by all prisoners within their cells. However, HIS inspectors were concerned about infection control risks linked to the ageing fabric of the residential parts of the establishment and the arrangements for staff changing in and out of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (see Quality Indicator 15 for further details on both these issues).

A LCRG had been established on 18 March 2020 and continues to take place daily with senior managers and on a weekly basis with partners. NHS colleagues were particularly appreciative of the opportunity this provided to discuss issues of mutual concern and get issues resolved, and strong relationships had clearly developed between SPS and NHS teams.

Only a relatively small number of staff had been on COVID-19 related sick leave, but 27 staff had been initially self-isolating in April 2020, which had reduced to one over the summer months before increasing again in the autumn and winter. Encouragingly, HMP Castle Huntly had, however, managed to provide full staffing throughout the pandemic, with the need for relatively minor levels of ex gratia payments.

Communication and relationships between senior management and staff, and in particular with the local Prison Liaison Representatives, were viewed positively by staff and all staff were clear on their roles and what was expected of them.

Communication with residents around COVID-19 risks and mitigation action appeared good, particularly in relation to the need to cancel Christmas home leave, triggered by changes in national COVID-19 restrictions. We commend all the staff at HMP Castle Huntly who cancelled their own Christmas leave to manage the additional number of residents in the establishment over the festive period and were able to deal with this challenging situation and help residents make the best of a difficult situation.

**Good Practice 1:** we commend HMP Castle Huntly on being one of the last prison establishments in Scotland able to record no positive COVID-19 cases amongst those in its care, particularly given the transmission risks inherent within the operation of an open estate and 'single household' philosophy.

**Good Practice 2:** communication around planning and the eventual need to cancel home leave for residents over Christmas was handled particularly well, and we commend those staff who had to cancel their own leave arrangements to support more residents in the establishment over the festive period.



## **HMIPS Standard 2 - Decency**

The prison supplies the basic requirements of decent life to the prisoners.

**The prison provides to all prisoners the basic physical requirements for a decent life. All buildings, rooms, outdoor spaces and activity areas are of adequate size, well maintained, appropriately furnished, clean and hygienic. Each prisoner has a bed, bedding and suitable clothing, has good access to toilets and washing facilities, is provided with necessary toiletries and cleaning materials and is properly fed. These needs are met in ways that promote each prisoner's sense of personal and cultural identity and self-respect.**

### **COVID-19 commentary**

2. Basic living requirements: we will check if meals are of good quality, whether there is an appropriate choice, and that food hygiene standards and dietary needs of prisoners are adhered to. Confirm that supplies of clothing, bedding, facility maintenance and food is continuing.

3. Regimes: we will look to obtain detail of the daily regimes and the progress made against the SPS recovery plan. We will continue to look at the human right standards for every prisoner including those in isolation: access to showers where there is no in-cell shower facilities, access to time in the fresh air, and access to communal phones. We will also monitor the amount of hours out of cell particularly for vulnerable populations. We will also check that there are sufficient accessible cell spaces for the population.

### **Visit findings**

Meals were observed being served by inspectors. There was a good choice on offer and the food was of a good quality. People working in the kitchen and serving meals wore the appropriate PPE.

The kitchen and serving area being in the same location helped ensure that the food was served at the required temperature. Serving times were staggered. Residents attended the serving area in house blocks and returned to their room to eat, as communal dining had been suspended. There was an effective one way system in place and physical distancing was observed to be followed. Residents selected their meal on arrival and it was put into polystyrene containers which kept the food warm on the journey back to their room. HMP Castle Huntly may wish to consider reintroducing communal dining in some form, given that the whole estate is classed as one household and residents are mixing freely within residential areas. Inspectors heard from some residents that if they were last to attend the serving area, there was only one choice left. Inspectors confirmed that this was a rare occurrence, that other options were available and no formal complaints had been raised in relation to this.

The menu rotated every three weeks and was reviewed three times per year. It was available in other languages and to meet prisoners' cultural/dietary needs. Extra milk was being provided to cover extended lock-up periods. The establishment made use of the on-site allotment and held theme nights such as 'Kebab Friday'.

Quarterly food focus groups were taking place and minutes were displayed, although few residents attended. However, all residents attended the same serving area, which allowed kitchen staff to obtain regular feedback and make more frequent adjustments to the menu.

The catering staff in the kitchen had worked very flexibly to provide meals for an increased population due to home leave and work placements being suspended. All kitchen staff were trained to an appropriate standard in food hygiene.

HMP Castle Huntly should consider how it can give all residents access to microwaves in their residential areas after 19:00, as only some residents had access to a microwave at present. The prison should also consider how it can promote self-catering opportunities in preparation for reintegration into the community.

Prisoners wore their own clothes throughout the establishment. Warm clothing and work clothing was provided. Prisoners have the opportunity to use their own bedding, provided it meets relevant fire ratings. However, unfortunately this has not been the case during the current restrictions. As restrictions ease prisoners will be allowed access to their own personal bedding.

Old/damaged bedding was replaced through the laundry process. All mattresses were replaced during 2020. During the visit the laundry was not running due to a fault, therefore the establishment used their reciprocal agreement with HMP Perth. There was ample bedding available in the laundry stores in each section. There was a process in place to launder clothes for those in isolation.

Facilities maintenance issues were dealt with timeously, despite COVID-19 slowing down their turnaround times due to revised COVID-19 processes as well as reduced staffing levels through staff isolating. There were issues with the fabric of the buildings and the establishment is in need of new accommodation buildings and staff facilities. Inspectors were informed that a survey of the building structure was about to take place and it was hoped that this would identify the issues and support the case for additional investment being provided.

Due to the pandemic, the daily regime had been shortened to a more restricted 'core day' running from 07:00 to 19:00. Inspectors saw the regime displayed in all residential areas and residents were fully aware of it.

Residents have 24 hour access to a sufficient number of communal phones. Murray House had in-room toilets and shared showers, and Bruce and Wallace Wing shared both toilets and showers. Inspectors were concerned, however, that two toilets and two showers shared between 20 residents in Wallace Wing was insufficient, but recognised that there was little the establishment could do to address this within the current accommodation setting. The shower and toilet areas were observed to be kept clean. The SPS are required to maintain a listed building at

HMP Castle Huntly but the accommodation areas are outdated and do not represent a pre-release experience akin to living in the community. The SPS should consider whether an alternative purpose-built establishment might be more appropriate and provide significant cost savings in the longer-term.

There was no restriction to fresh air during unlock hours. Those isolating and placed in the ILU had one hour of exercise per day.

At the time of the visit, three residents had been identified as requiring accessible rooms and there were three accessible rooms within the establishment. The room located in Murray House was a good size with an in-room toilet and walk-in shower. There were a further two rooms with a shared toilet and walk-in shower located in Bruce Wing. However, these rooms were very small and it is questionable if they are in fact fit-for-purpose.

At the time of the visit all residents were located in single cell accommodation, and the maximum single cell capacity was 168.

**Action Point 1:** HMP Castle Huntly may wish to consider reintroducing communal dining in some form, given that the whole estate is classed as one household and residents are mixing freely within residential areas.

**Action Point 2:** HMP Castle Huntly should consider the introduction of self-catering or, if not possible, access to small pantries including microwaves within the residential areas.

**Action Point 3:** HMP Castle Huntly should consider if the two accessible cells located in Bruce Wing are appropriate to accommodate residents with additional requirements and whether further provision of accessible cells is required.

**Action Point 4:** SPS - Substantial modernisation and improvement to the accommodation blocks is essential. A significant increase in the number of single cells is also needed; a full rebuild or alternative location should be considered to ensure modern single cell accommodation with in-cell toilet and showers for all residents.



## **HMIPS Standard 3 - Personal Safety**

The prison takes all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of all prisoners.

**All appropriate steps are taken to minimise the levels of harm to which prisoners are exposed. Appropriate steps are taken to protect prisoners from harm from others or themselves. Where violence or accidents do occur, the circumstances are thoroughly investigated and appropriate management action taken.**

### **COVID-19 commentary**

4. Violence Reduction: we will check that there is an appropriate and ongoing process in place for people subject to Talk to Me (TTM) and those that self-harm. We will look at the trends and impact since COVID-19. We will also check that there is appropriate and ongoing process in place for those subject to the Think Twice policy (anti-bullying).

5. Rule 41 paperwork and those on Rule 40a: we will check that the revised process for people being detained under Rule 41 and Rule 40a due to COVID-19 are being adhered to. Looking at processes in place to ensure people are receiving the appropriate human rights entitlements, and that there is in-cell distraction activity available, such as a television, reading material, fitness advice and other support mechanisms.

### **Visit findings**

Numbers on TTM were low in HMP Castle Huntly. Staff were able to confirm the TTM process and records show over 94% of staff are currently compliant with the TTM training. HMP Castle Huntly and HMP Perth have an agreement that those who are deemed at risk under TTM will transfer at the earliest opportunity. Until the transfer takes place, they are held within a designated holding cell. The two holding cells cannot be deemed as safer cells due to ligature points and therefore those that are placed there are on constant observation. The layout of the holding room is also not ideal, where one of the cells observation holes is situated in the duct between the two cells. Constant observation impacts heavily on resources, given the small number of staff on duty on a daily basis. To manage this process, HMP Castle Huntly have a call-out list of staff that can be utilised if required.

Only one person since March 2020 had been on the TTM process and had been held in the holding cell for approximately four hours before being transferred to HMP Perth. However, even for this short period of time the holding cells are not suitable and need refurbishment.

Inspectors met with prisoners who were listeners and peer mentors. HMP Castle Huntly have six active listeners with four having recently completed training. It was reported that the listeners had a very good relationship with the Samaritans, meeting monthly with the team from Dundee. Having a dual role of listener and mentor they try to meet those that are transferred into HMP Castle Huntly as soon as they arrive so that they can introduce themselves, explain their role and offer early support to new arrivals in adjusting to open conditions.

There is a list of listeners in each area and the layout of HMP Castle Huntly lends itself to easy access to the service. This also reduces the need for prisoners to ask staff for an appointment encouraging access and confidentiality. As prisoners are free to move from area to area it is easy for a listener to meet someone incognito. It was reported that a number of prisoners had been struggling during lockdown and a chance to talk had really helped. Although prisoners have access to PIN phones 24 hours a day, the introduction of mobile phones that include access to the Samaritans via a Freephone number has been welcomed.

The Think Twice policy was in place with all documentation accessible to staff. However, to date only 25% of staff had been through the awareness training. Staff, however, had a good understanding of the policy and actions they would take where bullying was suspected. Due to the layout of the estate, staff reported that it could be difficult to identify bullying behaviour and relied mostly on self-reporting. Posters were displayed throughout the prison encouraging the reporting of this type of behaviour and the induction for new arrivals explained the process for reporting bullying and the implications if caught displaying these behaviours. The Think Twice policy is a standing agenda item on the local Equality and Diversity meetings with a local data base recording incidents. Since July 2020 five instances of a suspected bullying report had been raised. On each occasion an action plan was put in place. In the majority of cases a move to another area within the prison alleviated the problem. HMP Castle Huntly have recently been awarded reasonable assurance during the last SPS HQ audit.

To date, HMP Castle Huntly has dealt with 19 cases where isolation was required due to suspected COVID-19. Fortunately, the prison has not had to deal with any positive test results so far. Inspectors visited the area set aside for dealing with those who require isolation which had previously been used as the ILU. The entrance point for admission was a door leading from the main thoroughfare of the prison and was easily and safely accessible with hand sanitiser available at the entrance.

Staff entered the ILU from a corridor leading from one of the main residential areas and there was no evidence of hand sanitiser available. Staff reported that they had their own personal supply on them at all times, however it is HMIPS's view that it is good practice to also have hand sanitiser available at the entry point to the ILU as insurance. On admission to the ILU, staff supplied information sheets explaining the need to physically distance themselves and when moving around wear a mask. Other information pertained to the regime, how meals would be served, and how to restrict cross-contamination by using the recommended disposal bags for laundry and rubbish.

On entering the ILU all prisoners are tested. The results are normally returned within 48 hours meaning that prisoners are not being held in this area longer than necessary. The ILU offers access to showers, phones if required, and a dedicated area to take fresh air away from the main population. Similar to the rest of the prison, prisoners can move freely within the ILU and therefore isolation is not guaranteed, with the responsibility being left to the individuals to self-isolate. This situation may present a risk. If, after a prisoner's test results identify them as being



negative, they could then be in contact with prisoners who may test positive from the same unit and at the end of their period of isolation transmit the virus back to the main population.

The area that gave HMIPS most concern was the two rooms identified for donning and doffing PPE. These rooms were situated out with the COVID-19 unit down a corridor towards the residential sections. There did not appear to be any cleaning materials to sanitise the corridor if staff were to walk down the corridor in contaminated PPE. The area to don PPE was situated in a residential section, a prison room. It had a sink to enable staff to wash their hands and had PPE. The area to doff PPE was an old store cupboard. It had a disposal bin for contaminated material but there was no sink for staff to wash their hands prior to leaving the area. The walls and flooring were aged and difficult to clean and therefore presented infection control concerns.

HMIPS reported to the GIC that the area required a rethink around the isolation of individuals, the donning and removal of PPE and refurbishment of walls to minimise the spread of infection. Following discussions between HMP Castle Huntly, NHS colleagues and Infection Prevention and Control on the liaison visit feedback, a meeting of the LCRG resulted in the rewriting of the SOP and improved processes and facilities.

On 25 March 2021, the Inspector of Prisons and a HIS inspector carried out a follow-up visit based on the SOP changes and were pleased to see the improvements made. The areas for donning and doffing PPE had been moved and are now situated within the ILU rather than outside as before. These rooms were cells, therefore have beds within and wooden shelving, the cleaning schedule indicates twice daily cleaning, all moveable equipment has been removed and therefore could be more effectively cleaned. The rooms have the appropriate PPE, posters prompts and hand sanitisers were available as well as a clinical waste bin within the doffing room. The staff toilet is allocated to the immediate right where hands can be washed.

Hand sanitiser was now available on entry to both sides of the ILU and a table had been set up as a barrier to separate staff and those in isolation where meals and mail could be placed for pick up. A cleaning schedule was in place to clean the ILU twice daily if occupied or once a week if not. Both prison and NHS staff confirmed that changes had been implemented with regard to arrangements for donning and doffing PPE when working in the ILU. HMIPS were content that these changes should improve infection control within HMP Castle Huntly.

**Action Point 5:** HMP Castle Huntly should look to keep all those placed in the ILU separate from each other to minimise the risk of contact with others leading to transmission of infection back into the rest of the establishment at the end of their period of isolation.



## **HMIPS Standard 4 - Effective, Courteous and Humane Exercise of Authority**

The prison performs the duties both to protect the public by detaining prisoners in custody and to respect the individual circumstances of each prisoner by maintaining order effectively, with courtesy and humanity

**The prison ensures that the thorough implementation of security and supervisory duties is balanced by courteous and humane treatment of prisoners and visitors to the prison. Procedures relating to perimeter, entry and exit security, and the personal safety, searching, supervision and escorting of prisoners are implemented effectively. The level of security and supervision is not excessive.**

### **COVID-19 commentary**

6. Rule 95 paperwork: we will look to visit the Separation and Reintegration Unit (SRU) as the place most likely to hold those managed under Rule 95. We will check that those under this rule are treated lawfully and with humanity, and there is a sufficient regime in place and procedural processes and human rights entitlements are adhered to.

### **Visit findings**

HMP Castle Huntly does not have a traditional SRU but utilises two holding cells in Wallace Wing for those managed under Rule 95(1). These rooms are also used to hold those on TTM and the Management of Offenders at Risk due to any Substance policy where necessary. Inspectors visited the cells, which were unoccupied at the time but were ready for occupancy with clean bedding and clothing. The area looked worn and outdated and the design of the holding area was not ideal. The cells were a reasonable size, clear of graffiti and received natural light from a window in the ceiling. However, there was evidence of damage to the sinks, the toilets were metal and did not have a screen to protect a person's privacy.

The bed consisted of a solid plinth with a mattress. Due to the L-shaped design of one of the holding cells, staff were unable to observe the occupant from the cell door and had to use an observation hole that was accessed through a narrow partition between the two holding cells. There was no access to a PIN phone, or a secure area to access fresh air, or ability to take a shower within the holding area. Therefore access to fresh air was taken on the astroturf area once it was free from other prisoners. Access to a PIN phone and shower was taken in Wallace Wing, again only after the area was free from other prisoners. Depending on accessibility to the main area in Wallace Wing, prisoners used the phone in the manager's office. At all such times three members of staff are present, which impacts HMP Castle Huntly's resources.

The prison's expectation is that prisoners will not be held in these conditions for more than 24 hours. There are arrangements in place with the escort provider to transfer any prisoner on a Rule 95(1) as soon as operationally possible. Of the 46 prisoners returned to closed conditions since April 2020, 27 had been held

overnight with no prisoner being held in the holding cell for more than 24 hours. However, the inspectors felt that the area was not fit-for-purpose even for a short period of time and that funds should be released immediately to refurbish the area.

**Action Point 6:** SPS should urgently refurbish the holding cells so that they are suitable to hold prisoners even for a short period of time.



## **HMIPS Standard 5 - Respect, Autonomy and Protection Against Mistreatment**

A climate of mutual respect exists between staff and prisoners. Prisoners are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their future. Their rights to statutory protections and complaints processes are respected.

**Throughout the prison, staff and prisoners have a mutual understanding and respect for each other and their responsibilities. They engage with each other positively and constructively. Prisoners are kept well informed about matters which affect them and are treated humanely and with understanding. If they have problems or feel threatened they are offered effective support. Prisoners are encouraged to participate in decision making about their own lives. The prison co-operates positively with agencies which exercise statutory powers of complaints, investigation or supervision.**

### **COVID-19 commentary**

7. Access to families contact: we will look at the SPS recovery planning and confirm the access prisoners have to keep in contact with friends and family. Monitoring the implementation and impact of agreed actions such as the availability and take up of virtual and face-to-face visits, the provision of access to and use of in-cell telephony, and incoming and outgoing mail including email. We will also monitor attitudes and progress towards the introduction of tablets or in-cell technology.
8. Access to recreation: we will check what type of social interaction takes place, that recreation is being run within the current regime, the amount of time and access by different cohorts and those with protected characteristics.
9. Access to legal representative: we will check that agents and other statutory visits are being facilitated even when prisoners are isolated under medical grounds for COVID-19 and that copies of the prison rules is readily available throughout the prison.
10. Access to information: we will look at the access to books and CDs and other information, for example the complaints system, access to Independent Prison Monitors (IPMs) and the free phone and Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO). We will also check the PANEL principle of participation and empowerment and confirm that Prison Information and Action Committee (PIACS) are regularly taking place and demonstrate progress.

### **Visit findings**

Both physical and virtual visits took place in the Link Centre however at the time most visits were undertaken virtually. Physical visits were not taking place at the time of the visit other than on an exceptional basis using the 'reasonable excuse' criteria, with each request considered on a case-by-case basis. The HMIPS view is that physical family visits should be an automatic entitlement.

If a physical visit was arranged, visitors arrived at the establishment and were met in the car park directly outside the Link Centre by staff who briefed them on how the visit would work. The seating areas were adequately spaced out and additional cleaning had been introduced in line with Scottish Government COVID-19 guidelines.

There was space in the visit area for six residents to have physical visits, with three, one hour sessions available Monday, Thursday, Friday and two, one hour sessions available at weekends, giving a capacity for 65 visits per week. Uptake was very low pre-COVID-19, which may be attributed to prisoners being eligible for home leave and not used to receiving visits.

Inspectors were informed that when physical visits were taking place the numbers were limited to two adults and two children per visit. One particular resident informed inspectors that he had three children so one had to be left behind, which was distressing for both the child and the adult. The view of HMIPS is that the number of children should not be limited.

There were three rooms allocated to virtual visits. There were five sessions offered Monday, Thursday, Friday and four sessions on a Saturday and Sunday, allowing for 69 visits each week. Each session lasted 30 minutes. The statistics appeared to indicate that the uptake was lower than the allocated spaces. When inspectors met with the Family Contact Officer, he reported that he had received 69 requests that day alone.

The reason that the spaces were not filled was the criteria for allocation. There appeared to be a cohort of around 80 residents who regularly took virtual visits. However, due to being limited to one visit at the weekend per month and two during the week their allocation was used up quickly. The rest of the population did not avail themselves of the same opportunities. Although the process allowed for booking additional visits this was only available to be booked 24 hours in advance. As the booking system was clunky, it made it difficult to fill slots at short notice. HMP Castle Huntly may wish to consider increasing how many visits they allow prisoners to have, particularly at the weekend given there are a number of prisoners that can only use virtual visits at the weekend due to family/friends work commitments.

Following the cancellation of home leave at Christmas, the establishment reacted quickly and worked hard to allocate two additional rooms for virtual visits. All residents were able to book a session on either Christmas Eve, Christmas Day or Boxing Day. Visits also took place on the Tuesday and Wednesday, which is not part of the usual visit session.

Residents had been provided with mobile phones and those spoken to were pleased to be able to contact family and friends more readily. A booster was fitted mid-January to improve the signal.

The Email a Prisoner Scheme was available and had been in place for many years. Prisoners spoken to were aware of it and how to access it, and said it worked well. Usage had risen significantly over the last year.

There were no issues reported with incoming or outgoing mail.

A Family Strategy Plan had been completed, but put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions.

HMP Castle Huntly has three residential areas, Murray House, Bruce and Wallace Wings. The living areas are made up of sections of cells which are open most of the day and only secured when the prison is confirming occupancy or at the end of the core day. After lock-up prisoners are able to move within the sections and if they choose can socialise in each other's rooms. Prisoners can secure their rooms from within with staff having an override key. At present due to COVID-19 prisoners are encouraged not to closely socialise but the prison leaves this to the choice of the occupants.

The sections allow 24 hour access to toilets, showers and a landline phone. Each section area has access to limited recreation with a variety of activities such as computer games, darts, table football, but there is no access to the recreation areas after lock-up. The COVID-19 isolation unit had no access to recreation.

The main recreation area can be found in Murray House. This is accessible to the whole population during the day. Prisoners can attend this area during their time, away from work or education. The area is a reasonable size and contains pool tables, a games room, TV, a vending machine and seating area to encourage socialisation. Prisoners and staff inform the inspectors that it was well used but some prisoners complained that the overall range of recreation activities was poor for the size of population, particularly when COVID-19 restrictions have increased the time spent on site. Social interaction could also take place in The Shack (see access to religious services) where prisoners can drop in for a chat, attend meetings and play instruments. The Link Centre is another area where prisoners can socialise, but unfortunately there are some restrictions in place in the use of amenities at this time due to COVID-19 which includes the closing of the Barista. HMIPS welcome the proposed opening of a take away coffee service, and would like to see the reopening of the full seating area within the Link Centre as soon as the lifting of national restrictions allows.

Residents had full access to agent and statutory visits and the process was working well. Two rooms had been allocated to telephone visits within the Link Centre and a booking system was in place. Residents cleaned the telephone before and after use themselves. Video conferencing equipment was also available to use in a separate room, but priority was given to ICM and other important face-to-face meetings. Solicitors could attend in person if they wished, but were encouraged to utilise telephone and video access, e.g. where papers need to be signed, and appropriate PPE was worn.

Residents had access to prison rules in the Link Centre and in the Orderly Room.

The library is well-used and much valued by prisoners – several prisoners described it as a 'lifeline' at this time. It was commendable that a process had been put in place to allow anyone who was having to self-isolate to still access these books and

DVDs while safely managing COVID-19 risks. Passmen were trained in use of the library systems and have been able to maintain the service while the Perth and Kinross library staff were unable to support this resource during the pandemic. The library has a good stock of DVDs which has recently been extended and refreshed through the purchase of new titles. Prisoners are able to put forward suggestions for these. A group of prisoners run the TV channel offer, supported by education centre and prison staff. They liaise with the prisoner population regarding preferences from the standard channels available and also on the content of the bespoke prison channels. This has included requests for fitness videos, for example Joe Wicks, which can be used to complement the fitness activities in the Fife College packs.

PIACs had operated throughout the pandemic, with minutes of meetings kept, which were retained in the Link Centre for viewing by others. Senior management acknowledged there were challenges in seeking representation from residents to sit on PIACs. Most of the frustrations raised by inspectors related to the issues that senior management were clearly already aware and were not easily resolved, such as the difficulty in arranging community placements, organising home leave or access to the gym. Senior management were perceived by prisoners to be visible and approachable, allowing issues to be raised and discussed outside formal PIAC forums or complaints processes.

Christmas home leave arrangements had been discussed during the December PIAC and it was clear, for example, that the risk that Christmas home leave might need to be cancelled had been raised and discussed appropriately.

Inspectors viewed a selection of PCF 1 and PCF 2 forms. Apart from one PCF 1, which would have benefitted from annotating more clearly in what way the complaint had been “resolved verbally”, these had all been dealt with in a satisfactory way. Senior management were aware of the risks in an open estate of a potential reluctance to ‘rock the boat’ through submitting complaints, and were committed to providing a culture where that did not happen, so it was encouraging that some prisoners did still feel able to use the complaints system.

**Action Point 7:** HMP Castle Huntly should remove the limit on the number of children that can attend physical visits.

**Action Point 8:** HMP Castle Huntly should consider increasing how many visits they allow prisoners to have, particularly at the weekend, as limiting prisoners to one per month could disadvantage those restricted to weekend visits due to their or family/friends work commitments.

**Action Point 9:** HMP Castle Huntly consider ways of reopening the Barista for take away beverages.

**Good Practice 3:** the Link Centre, and in particular its library, provided an excellent resource and it was encouraging that prisoners self-isolating could still get access to books.

## **HMIPS Standard 6 - Purposeful Activity**

All prisoners are encouraged to use their time in prison constructively. Positive family and community relationships are maintained. Prisoners are consulted in planning the activities offered.

**The prison assists prisoners to use their time purposefully and constructively and provides a broad range of activities, opportunities and services based on the profile of needs of the prisoner population. Prisoners are supported to maintain positive relationships with family and friends in the community. Prisoners have the opportunity to participate in recreational, sporting, religious, and cultural activities. Prisoners' sentences are managed appropriately to prepare them for returning to their community.**

### **COVID-19 commentary**

11. Education, Employment and Physical Education (PE): we will check the progress of the SPS recovery plan for this element including the availability of purposeful activity for all cohorts in the prison. We will understand the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on purposeful activity and check the percentage of prisoners receiving purposeful activity. We will check access to the gym, if the gymnasiums are available, including satellite gymnasiums and/or information sheets for prisoners to keep fit and healthy. We will also check access to outside PE facilities. **An advanced data request by the Education Inspectorate will be used to collate figures prior to the liaison visit.**

### **(Standard 6 - Purposeful Activity)**

12. Access to religious services: we will look at any initiatives involving religious services including remote linked services, information loops on in house media, or religious information pamphlets.

### **Visit findings**

As the only open prison in Scotland, the nature and purpose of operations at HMP Castle Huntly focusses on preparing prisoners for release into the community at the end of their sentence. This purpose is reflected in the nature and range of purposeful activity provided for prisoners under normal pre-pandemic conditions, where almost 56% of purposeful activity opportunities relate to activities out in the community through work placement or project work. The prison operates with all prisoners integrated as one cohort which adds to the flexibility the prison has in planning and allocating to placements, projects and work parties.

Given the nature of the profile of purposeful opportunities, the impact of the initial lockdown in the spring of 2020 was very significant, with all external opportunities being suspended. In March 2020, immediately prior to lockdown, there were 81 prisoners employed within the community. In addition, the education unit was also closed during this period. As a result, both the number and range of opportunities available to prisoners was substantially reduced. Placement and project wages were maintained at pre-lockdown rates so participating prisoners were



not financially disadvantaged. Work parties classified as essential, benefited from a £10 weekly bonus.

Following the initial lockdown, a process for resuming external placements commenced with updating all placement risk assessments including reassessment of suitability of the placement in the light of COVID-19 Health and Safety restrictions. This resulted in placements beginning to become available in autumn 2020. The number of placements operating had increased to 16. However, as national COVID-19 restrictions tightened in response to the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic, external placements were suspended for a second time.

Internal work parties, which focus on servicing the operational needs of the prison, continued through this period with appropriate COVID-19 safety measures in place.

Throughout this period, prison staff have worked closely across internal teams and with external partners to review opportunities for prisoners and mitigate against the impact of COVID-19 restrictions where possible. This includes working closely with the manager of the education unit and community partners.

Overall, prison staff have worked effectively to create further work opportunities within the estate. For example, through increased numbers on the cleaning work party to support delivering COVID-19 hygiene and sanitising arrangements, and also in response to increased pressures placed on catering and laundry services. The team identified additional opportunities where increased numbers in work parties could be deployed in relation to COVID-19 related hygiene/sanitisation routines. Other work parties have also identified alternative or additional work. For example, the Projects Group are undertaking new activities which can be done safely within COVID-19 restrictions and the Grounds and Gardens Groups have supported the development of an allotment garden and logging of trees on the estate that required removal. A period of no new admissions also reduced the pressure on access to purposeful activity. However, it has not been possible for the prison to compensate fully for the range and number of opportunities lost as a result of the required suspension of external placements.

In August 2020, the education unit reopened with appropriate COVID-19 risk management arrangements in place, following joint risk assessment with SPS and Fife College staff. During this period of reopening, both formal planned sessions and drop-in sessions resumed, albeit with reduced capacity as a result of physical distancing restrictions.

During the period of the initial lockdown, Fife College staff liaised with SPS staff to ensure the prison's two Open University students would be able to continue their studies. They also produced paper-based activity packs which prisoners could undertake in their cells. Topics ranged from numeracy puzzles, health and wellbeing information and activities, and special interest topics, for example astronomy. Prisoner feedback was sought on the packs and used to inform the development of further topics. College staff returned on-site in July 2020 to prepare the centre for reopening on 10 August with all COVID-19 related physical distancing and hygiene arrangements in place. The centre reopened with a full timetable and in the period following reopening, approximately 46% of prisoners engaged in some form of

structured education. In addition, the centre was also well-used by other prisoners on a flexible, 'drop-in' basis. Over the period August-November 2020, the monthly prisoner learning hours (PLH) increased significantly from 544 to 1076 hours. In October and November the average PLHs was approximately 1,000 hours per month which compares favourably with the same period the previous year (1,400 hours) given the physical restriction on numbers who can attend at any one time and reduced prison population compared with the same period in 2019. The centre has continued to support prisoners with activities to support their literacy, communication and numeracy development. For example, through project work exploring 'Remembrance Day' and using the focus of Black History Month to explore equalities themes.

The learning centre closed again on 18 December due to further COVID-19 restrictions and remained closed at the time of the liaison visit. During this time prisoners had no access to tutors to support their learning. A phased return on-site by Fife College staff had commenced and plans were in place for the imminent reopening of the centre to residents.

The education unit training kitchen remains closed due to COVID-19 risk assessment and the ILU has been set aside as a COVID-19 isolation unit. As a result, there are currently no opportunities for prisoners to develop independent living skills, for example cooking.

The prison has a well-equipped gym facility. This had been reconfigured to allow safe use in line with COVID-19 safety guidance when it re-opened after the initial lockdown. However, use of this facility was suspended again following national guidance. Physical Training Instructors (PTIs) have worked with prisoners to provide alternative opportunities for access to physical activities and exercise in the form of an external gym programme. Activities are designed to cover a wide range of fitness and ability levels and include traditional gym activities, such as circuit and weight training, and also 'fit clubs', a cycle route, walking route, and putting/crazy golf. Additional resources have been purchased to support this, for example cycles. A prisoner mentor group has also been established to encourage the less active in the population to become involved. These activities have been welcomed by prisoners, however, there is still a strong feeling amongst prisoners that the gym could be used safely with restrictions in place and in the context of the prison household bubble. PTIs continuously evolve the programme and timetable to reflect demand and accommodate regime changes. Access to external gym facilities is good overall and well used, however access has been limited on occasions by adverse weather conditions.

HMP Castle Huntly have a small but dedicated team delivering pastoral care and is based in a building named 'The Shack'. The Shack is a modern building, bright and welcoming and is open to all within the hours of unlock whilst adhering to physical distancing. There are representatives from the Reform and Roman Catholic churches as well as an Imam. The team also assisted other prisons in their pastoral care so they were not full-time at HMP Castle Huntly. The team offered the traditional pastoral care, with the reform church offering an on-line church service as well as a more informal religious study class in a Sunday, where prisoners could drop in and out during the afternoon. Roman Catholic mass is held weekly as well

as a visit from the Imam for prayers on a Friday morning. Numbers attending are not as high as previously experienced, the reasons are mainly due to COVID-19 restrictions and a lower population than is normally the case.

COVID-19 had not affected the team in the same way as it had in other more secure prisons, but some services such as the fellowship meetings had been suspended. Although isolation due to restrictions during COVID-19 was not such an issue within HMP Castle Huntly, the team still produced activity packs and continued to be visible within the prison setting to allow those that wished an opportunity to talk to them. The Chaplain had produced the 'Chaplaincy Chat' newsletter that had been circulated to other Chaplaincies within the SPS and had been noted by HMIPS in previous liaison visits.

The team consider themselves very much a part of assisting prisoners to reintegrate back into the community. They attend local weekly induction, and offer support and advice. With limited numbers, they run six one session a week classes on subjects including victim empathy and restorative justice. Previously, as part of reintegration, prisoners were allowed to attend an external church service which the prison Chaplain organised. However, this has been temporarily suspended. It was pleasing to note that the GIC informed the inspection team that there were plans to reintroduce this when risk assessments and Scottish Government guidelines allowed.

**Good Practice 4:** prison staff, working closely with prisoners, have come up with flexible solutions to meeting the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions and their impact on purposeful activity. For example, through reconfiguring how access to a range of types and levels of PE and exercise can be provided and promoted to support the health and wellbeing of prisoners.

**Good Practice 5:** arrangements to maintain access to library resources and use of the prison TV channel, including prisoner involvement in their running, has made a significant positive contribution to prisoner wellbeing during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.

**Action Point 10:** SPS and Fife College should explore the options for the provision of remote access to learning and tutor support to assist in the provision of continuity to learning. For example, video links for real-time interactions and secure sharing of learning materials electronically to provide a more blended approach to learning.

**Action Point 11:** SPS and the Scottish Government should review guidance for restrictions to access prison gyms and indoor PE spaces to take more account of the unique context within prisons overall and the settings of individual institutions. In particular with HMP Castle Huntly operating as a single household the scope for increased access to the gym should be reviewed.

**Action Point 12:** HMP Castle Huntly Prison staff should continue to review opportunities for purposeful activity to maximise opportunities for prisoners - particularly in the context of internal work parties but also in relation to opportunities for prisoners to develop independent living skills.

**Action Point 13:** HMP Castle Huntly prison staff should explore opportunities arising in work parties to provide certification of basic vocational skills at unit or component level to provide prisoners with formal recognition of skills gained.



## HMIPS Standard 7 - Transitions from Custody to Life in the Community

Prisoners are prepared for their successful return to the community.

**The prison is active in supporting prisoners for returning to their community at the conclusion of their sentence. The prison works with agencies in the community to ensure that resettlement plans are prepared, including specific plans for employment, training, education, healthcare, housing and financial management.**

### COVID-19 commentary

13. Progression: we will look at the progress SPS has made through the recovery plan on progression. This will include looking at sentence planning, Risk Management Team (RMT), Integrated Case Management (ICM), National Top End (NTE) and transfers. We will check the access to offending behaviour programmes and the waiting lists and concerns. We will check that all processes are in place to ensure progression is being managed and understand the inhibitors and shortfalls. ***Some information will be sought remotely and prior to the liaison visit.***

14. Prisoners on release: we will consider throughcare arrangements, including links between prison-based and community-based social work services. We will look at reintegration plans developed with those leaving custody regarding access to housing services and how many prisoners are released to no fixed abode. What health and social care support they will receive, contact with family support and welfare services pre-release, and opportunities to utilise their time constructively. ***Some information will be sought remotely and prior to the liaison visit. The Care Inspectorate representative will be supported by a colleague undertaking telephone and video interviews both prior to and during the liaison visit.***

### Visit findings

The RMT process has continued throughout the pandemic. Attendance of key prison staff (PBSW and Psychological Services) has been sustained, at times through remote access, throughout the pandemic and in line with restrictions and physical distancing measures. We heard that prisoners are frustrated by the suspension of community access, whilst also accepting that restrictions were affecting all parts of society. Although community access was suspended, the RMT continued to ensure prisoner's plans were up-to-date and there would be no backlog when community access was reinstated. We noted that there were regular audits of assessments to ensure these were current. In addition to this we noted that there had been a file review of all cases in September 2020 and there was ongoing monitoring of home leave requests. The PBSW team and psychological services have both been able to continue to work on-site throughout the pandemic and provided with the equipment they need to work effectively from home as part of a blended approach.

There is some frustration that a national progression information sharing event, bringing together representatives from all establishments and scheduled for March 2020 at HMP Castle Huntly, was cancelled. This event was to be rescheduled. The

Casework Manager at HMP Castle Huntly takes a proactive role in promoting best practice and during the pandemic HMP Castle Huntly have continued to work hard to maintain good working relationships with sending establishments. Transfers into HMP Castle Huntly ceased on 24 March 2020 and recommenced in August 2020. Thereafter, the progression process has continued throughout the pandemic. The prisoners we spoke with during the visit were satisfied that their transfer to HMP Castle Huntly had been managed well, even within the context of national restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

Following an initial relaxing of ICM scheduling, in line with national COVID-19 guidance, by July 2020 the prison resumed the completion of annual ICMs. Pre-liberation ICMs have continued throughout the pandemic. PBSW have been fully consulted and have maintained full involvement in these meetings in line with COVID-19 restrictions. Community-based social workers have been able to attend these meetings remotely. We heard from prisoners that they have been able to attend these meetings in person and the involvement of family at the Link Centre has also been re-established. Remote access to these meetings has been difficult but we saw that there was evidence of the use of conference call facilities for family (from November 2020) and video attendance for prison-based and community-based professionals. Personal Officers have continued to input to ICM case conferences, and we heard that every effort has been made to ensure that staffing rotas enable them to attend.

Whilst the prison had established safe practices for families to attend in person from July 2020 this has continued to be adversely affected by travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic. Inevitably this has affected family involvement in these key meetings. We also heard that prior to the pandemic ICMs were used as an opportunity to support engagement with the family but the restrictions meant that the visit was limited to attendance at the meeting.

From all the discussions we had with staff and prisoners the most consistently identified negative impact of the pandemic has been the impact on community access, community-based employment and training, and home leave. In relation to progression and returning to the community this has limited face-to-face contact with family, friends, and support services. This in turn impacts on the development of key relationships for support. There were specific comments about identifying vulnerabilities in face-to-face contact which are hidden on the phone or in video meetings. These issues are not unique to HMP Castle Huntly but their key role in progression, the assessment and management of risk is significant for successful transition and public protection.

During the visit it was clear that staff across the prison were working together to support individuals who were feeling the impact of the pandemic on their progress and key decisions being made about them. All the prisoners we spoke with had at least one key member of staff they had a good relationship with. We heard that the prison identifies key staff for prisoners prior to their progression to HMP Castle Huntly to foster these connections. These key members of staff were providing good information to prisoners on key processes. The Link Centre was a place where

individuals could go to for a chat and the social work team based in the prison were also ensuring they had a team member on duty to provide support on-site during the day.

During the pandemic, the social work team had undertaken Caledonian Training and inspectors heard that they were piloting preparatory sessions for one individual. The programme addresses domestic abuse offending and is delivered in the community. This preparatory work enables individuals to join existing programmes in the community. They have been well supported to undertake the training and implement the approach during the pandemic. This evidenced a good level of individual support from the local authority and the prison. During the pandemic, this support has increased, ensuring there was little disruption at the start of the first lockdown, creating a safe working environment, and monitoring the ongoing impact of the pandemic on the service.

HMP Castle Huntly mainly work with prisoners subject to statutory conditions or being released on parole. For all prisoners, the Personal Officer role at HMP Castle Huntly is a key source of support to access the services and support they may need on release. Most of the prisoners we spoke with were positive about the role of the Personal Officer in keeping them informed about key meetings and decisions. Reintegration plans are developed with prisoners although there was a mixed view among prisoners, we spoke with about how much they are involved. Those who identified that they needed support on release were also able to identify the help they had from Personal Officers to contact key agencies in the community, e.g. addictions services. Other prison staff and external agencies identified the key role of Personal Officers in terms of communication with prisoners.

In their self-evaluation HMP Castle Huntly recognised the challenge of meeting the various support needs of prisoners on release during the pandemic. The value of face-to-face contact with services in the community, planned within community access arrangements, has been accentuated where this has not been possible during the pandemic. We heard that some exceptional face-to-face visits by and to community-based services had been safely managed during the restrictions. Some of the people we spoke with during the visit were unclear whether teleconferencing facilities were available for contact with community-based services. Phone contact was currently the predominant means of communication and we heard from prisoners and staff that this was not conducive to the establishment of important supportive relationships with key services and professionals.

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements meetings and parole hearings have continued throughout the pandemic taking place online through video conferencing facilities. The attendance of key staff from all agencies and the provision of up-to-date reports and assessments has largely<sup>1</sup> been sustained throughout the pandemic. This has ensured that defensible decisions can be made, and risk management plans are developed to support both a successful return to the community and public protection. Three of the prisoners we spoke with during the visit had recently been considered for release at parole hearings and noted the

---

<sup>1</sup> Between July and December 2020 parole decisions were deferred on 6 occasions due to the non-attendance of community based social workers.

support of a team of officers who manage parole at HMP Castle Huntly. There is a perception amongst prisoners that parole is likely to be refused where they have been unable to evidence progress through community access. They reflect that, as this is currently suspended in line with national restrictions it is not possible for them to meet this criterion. HMP Castle Huntly report that release on parole has been agreed for a comparable number of prisoners over the period of the pandemic, but recognise the frustration of prisoners.

We heard concerns from staff and prisoners about the availability of accommodation on release and the added concern about the impact of the pandemic on key resources. HMP Castle Huntly has worked hard during the pandemic to sustain close relationship with temporary accommodation providers where demand has decreased. They have also continued to make referrals to local authorities in line with interim SHORE (Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone) standards. The ICM process ensures that the housing needs of individuals are discussed as part of plans developed prior to release. During the pandemic prisoners have safely returned to the community but we also saw that prisoners were leaving HMP Castle Huntly not knowing where they would be staying prior to the day of liberation. Whilst all prisoners were said to have 'suitable accommodation' this appears to be sometimes arranged on the day of release. All partners should aspire for all individuals to have more clarity about accommodation and housing prior to liberation.

Employment and benefits advice has been available to prisoners throughout the pandemic with ongoing online and phone support from the Department of Work and Pensions. Whilst this specialist knowledge would always be required, we heard that prison staff had also increased their knowledge of benefits. Link Centre staff had taken the novel step of going through the first stages of the universal credit application process to help improve the advice they give to prisoners.

The restrictions significantly affect the employment and training offer, but we did hear that some individuals have been able to undertake training during the pandemic with one prisoner reporting the completion of a peer mentoring programme through Fife College. He has subsequently engaged with an addiction service in the community and intends to act as a peer mentor on release. This was a good example of creating opportunities within the prison to develop skills and contacts to support successful integration.

**Good Practice 6:** the PBSW team has been well supported by the local authority and the prison to fulfil its role in relation to key processes for progression. In addition to this, during the pandemic, they have been able to implement delivery of preparatory work with an individual eligible for the Caledonian programme. This programme addresses domestic abuse offending and individuals can engage with the programme on return to the community.

**Action Point 14:** HMP Castle Huntly should explore how they can maximise the opportunity for agencies to be available to prisoners due for release through video conferencing facilities for community-based agencies.



**Action Point 15:** With appropriate reference to the aspirational SHORE standards, HMP Castle Huntly should engage with local authorities to ensure that pre-release prisoners have more clarity about accommodation and housing prior to liberation.



## **HMIPS Standard 9 – Health and Wellbeing**

The prison takes all reasonable steps to ensure the health and wellbeing of all prisoners.

**All prisoners receive care and treatment which takes account of all relevant NHS standards, guidelines, and evidence-based treatments. Healthcare professionals play an effective role in preventing harm associated with prison life and in promoting the health and wellbeing of all prisoners.**

### **COVID-19 commentary**

15. Healthcare issues: we will check that there is a daily assessment on wellbeing in a way that maintains the health and safety of all parties, and that there are measures in place to ensure healthcare continues to be managed under the principle of equivalence. Checking processes are in place to support people with pre-existing health conditions and that access to vital healthcare is available to all cohorts. We will gain an understanding of the mental health challenges

### **Visit findings**

HIS asked Perth & Kinross Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) staff at HMP Castle Huntly to complete a pro forma in advance of the liaison visit regarding the healthcare provision during the pandemic. HIS inspectors then held a teleconference meeting with the Prison Healthcare Leadership Team and Senior Leaders from the HSCP to discuss the completed pro forma and to help inform the key lines of enquiry for the visit. During the liaison visit, two inspectors spoke with members of the prison healthcare team and viewed the care environment within the health centre. The inspectors did not speak with or come into contact with any patients to safeguard prisoner and staff safety.

Our inspection took into account that HMP Castle Huntly is an open prison accommodating low supervision adults and aimed at supporting prisoners to transition into the community. The prison healthcare team aims to deliver a primary care model that is similar to what happens in the community, to help prepare prisoners to transition on release.

To reflect the coronavirus pandemic, our inspectors reviewed the documentation provided to prisoners to support them to transition, such as information around wearing masks, physical distancing, testing and self-isolation.

### **Access to care**

Patients who are symptomatic of COVID-19 or require to isolate are placed in a designated unit within the prison to reduce the risk of transmission. Healthcare staff provide essential and/or urgent healthcare to these patients in their cells and the SPS provides a cohort group of staff for consistent support. SPS staff are informed of patients who required to isolate to ensure that SPS staff wear PPE during any interactions. SPS staff would also request an urgent NHS assessment if an individual reported deterioration in their condition or if they observed deterioration in a patient's

condition. Medical and nursing staff followed the deteriorating patient pathway throughout the pandemic and liaised with the COVID-19 team at Ninewells Hospital. No patients would be transferred to HMP Castle Huntly from a closed prison if there was an ongoing outbreak of COVID-19. Patient transfers are planned to consider risks and to minimise the risk of coronavirus transmission.

At the start of the pandemic, NHS prison healthcare staff were trained to carry out COVID-19 tests for patients in HMP Castle Huntly to reduce the risk of people needing to attend external testing centres. All mental health, occupational therapy and substance misuse patients were assessed and given a 'red, amber, green' risk score to establish who would require contact during the pandemic. There is ongoing assessment of these patients to identify any change in risk levels. **This is good practice.**

A blend of telephone and face-to-face consultations was introduced for patient appointments. Near Me (a secure NHS video call service for patients) is used for some secondary care appointments.

Prison healthcare staff are encouraged to take COVID-19 vaccination. At the time of the visit, over 60% of staff have been vaccinated to date. Lateral Flow Testing (a rapid test for COVID-19 that does not require laboratory equipment) is available to all patient-facing health staff and over 50% of staff have signed up for the testing packs. Healthcare staff are undertaking vaccination training to enable patients in risk groups to be vaccinated in line with national guidance.

Prison officers are not being asked to undertake lateral flow testing at present, however, we were informed that SPS is taking this forward nationally through Public Health Scotland.

### **Primary care**

Patients attend the prison health centre which provides a variety of healthcare, including supervised medication, seven days a week. Patients go out of the establishment for dental or optometry appointments. In March 2020, the healthcare team moved to a core working shift (08:00–16:00) Monday-Friday, in line with the SPS regime change. At the time of the liaison visit, healthcare staff had resumed their original shift pattern and were working 07:00-15:00 daily except on a Tuesday where there is a second shift working 12:00-20:00 to accommodate patient transfers. Out-of-hours cover is provided at evenings and weekends.

Early in the pandemic, the healthcare team identified individuals deemed to be at high risk and issued guidance letters to them. These patients were offered a GP telephone appointment to discuss their care and why they should consider shielding. They were also offered the opportunity to shield in a designated area.

A telephone appointment request system was in place and referrals are screened using a matrix to determine suitability for GP or nurse review based on clinical need. **This is good practice.** Patients requiring physical assessment or treatment were given a face-to-face appointment.

The weekly GP clinic also moved to telephone triage and continues to be a mix of telephone and face-to-face with appropriate PPE. The current waiting time for access to the GP is three weeks. Staff informed us that they can get prompt access to the GP out with the clinic time if necessary. Staff also described how they could access GP advice from HMP Perth if needed. The healthcare team is currently looking at options to improve the availability of GP services that better mirrors the community provision. This includes a proposal which may enable patients to go to a GP outside the prison for urgent appointments that cannot be managed in the weekly clinic.

Primary care clinics continued during the pandemic, based on requests for appointments, with the use of appropriate PPE. A daily nurse clinic is provided Monday-Friday which has been working well for both patients and staff.

All non-essential pharmacy appointments ceased in March 2020 but have since recommenced in line with community primary care pharmacy services. The pharmacy team offers telephone appointments.

There has been no change to the process for the administration of Opiate Replacement Therapy during the pandemic. Primary care staff deliver one supervised medication round in the morning. All patients attend the health centre. We saw that nursing staff administer the medication through a hatch. All medicine cups are single use only and are disposed of by the patient into a clinical waste bag. All other medication in HMP Castle Huntly is in-possession and patients are assessed to manage their own medication. **This is good practice and promotes autonomy.** All medication reviews are completed by the GP.

There was no long-term health condition clinics before the pandemic. However, primary care staff have taken the opportunity to review drug kardexes, transfer documentation and Vision records to assess care needs and to support oversight of all patients, many of which have multiple conditions. This review also includes care planning for patients. The healthcare team aims to establish long-term health condition management clinics for a range of conditions.

Throughout the pandemic patients continued to have access to urgent on-site occupational therapy assessment. **This is good practice.** Routine referrals to occupational therapy recommenced during wave one of the pandemic and a red, amber or green status was applied to patient cases. A weekly clinic is held and staff assess patient physical health needs, for example, where a change in cell location is required. The occupational therapy team has commenced familiarisation visits for expected patient transfers who have complex needs. This has allowed planning of all aids and adaptations required for patients on their transfer. **This is good practice.**

There was no one identified for social care at the outbreak of the pandemic and all new transfers continued to have a social care needs assessment on arrival into the prison. Any patients requiring social care services would be referred to social work by SPS but this is agreed in partnership with health.

Sexual health clinics are ongoing and are provided by the primary care team. At the time of the liaison visit, there were no patients waiting to be seen by primary care services. Access to secondary care appointments has continued in line with community provision. Near Me is regularly used for planned hospital appointments and transfers to hospital are supported by the NHS Tayside COVID-19 Hospital Admission Pathway. Transfer of prisoners into HMP Castle Huntly was paused during wave one of the pandemic, but has since recommenced.

## **Mental Health**

Following the COVID-19 outbreak and cancellation of home leave and work parties, the mental health team increased their contact with patients to provide them with support. Throughout the pandemic the mental health team delivered interventions for patients who were identified as having a 'red' or 'amber' risk of deterioration in their health. All 'green' risk patients were stepped up to amber, where appropriate, to increase contact and support.

The team moved to telephone consultations and continued to triage referrals. Face-to-face consultations were offered to patients when appropriate. Depot injections (for slow release of medication over time to permit less frequent administration) and management of patients who have communication difficulties have continued via face to face consultations with appropriate PPE.

A weekly mental health clinic is held. Routine mental health referrals, which also include patients on the 'green' risk list, have now recommenced in line with national guidance. At the time of the liaison visit, the waiting time for a routine referral to mental health service was one to two weeks and 72 hours for emergency cases.

In previous reports we have highlighted the challenges faced by the Partnership to recruit to the Clinical Psychology post across the two prisons in Tayside. This post has remained vacant during the pandemic. We saw that this gap has been recorded in the Partnership risk register and a register of unmet need is being kept. This cohort of patients continue to receive support and treatment from the mental health team. The Forensic Consultant Psychiatrist continued to attend HMP Castle Huntly during the pandemic and used appropriate PPE.

The occupational therapy team supplied the SPS with wellbeing information to distribute to all prisoners as well as diversion packs to help alleviate boredom during the pandemic.

The Senior Charge Nurse in the mental health team provides a weekly clinic.

## **Substance Misuse**

The substance misuse team continued to accept referrals and offer assessment and treatment via telephone appointments, and if needed, face-to-face appointments were offered wearing appropriate PPE. **This is good practice.** The team continued to deliver interventions to patients indicated as 'red' or 'amber' acknowledging their risk of deterioration. The Senior Charge Nurse in the substance misuse team provides a weekly clinic and consultant cover is provided on a monthly basis. At the

time of the liaison visit, the waiting time to access the substance misuse service was one week. The substance misuse team also issued diversion packs to patients during the pandemic.

The substance misuse team remained in contact with the community providers throughout the pandemic. Blood Borne Virus (BBV) testing and treatment has now restarted and dry blood spot testing is offered on admission.

Patients can be referred for BBV testing or they would phone the healthcare team for an appointment.

Like other establishments, the prison healthcare team is progressing the implementation of the new drug 'Buvidal' in response to the Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): clinical guidance on the use of Buvidal in prisons.](#)

Individuals liberated from prison or who attended court were provided with medication, including the drug Naloxone (Naloxone is a drug used to reverse the effects of opiate overdose). Peer support prisoners offered individual Naloxone training and Naloxone kits were placed alongside individuals' belongings. The health improvement team had created a support services leaflet for individuals being liberated and a throughcare document to support community agencies when a prisoner is liberated. We saw evidence of community service information leaflets and individual planning for community follow-up.

### **Infection Control/Health centre environment**

On entering HMP Castle Huntly, infection prevention and control measures were clearly visible. Areas where healthcare and pharmacy were to be delivered had been reconfigured at the start of the pandemic, to create more space for staff to take into account social distancing restrictions. We saw signage on doors alerting staff of the maximum number of staff allowed inside the room. **This is good practice.**

All areas where healthcare was delivered were visibly clean and of a good standard despite the ageing fabric of the building. Preventative maintenance has continued during the pandemic. The health centre had been recently painted, flooring replaced and doors were due to be painted.

Out with the health centre, the fabric of the building is compromised. We saw that corridors were unable to be effectively cleaned due to the aged fabric of the building. We were shown areas where staff would be donning and doffing PPE in the event that prisoners would be in isolation. These rooms were of a very poor standard and were not fit for purpose. There was no facility for hand washing in one of these rooms and due to the poor fabric of the building they cannot be effectively cleaned. This was a concern. However, to their credit, HMP Castle Huntly responded immediately the issue was raised and on a return visit inspectors could see that much more appropriate alternative arrangements for donning and removing PPE had been rapidly introduced (see page 15)

Equipment checked was clean and of a good standard. One trolley within the GP room had a break in the fabric and there was exposed foam. As this could not be unzipped, we were unable to determine if there was any ingress. However, we raised this with the healthcare team during the visit and are assured that this will be replaced. Staff described the products they would use in line with national guidance to decontaminate the equipment and the environment. We were shown evidence of these products. However, the posters displayed were incorrect and described the dual detergent and disinfectant product, while the product in use was disinfectant only. We asked for these to be replaced during our visit to avoid confusion.

Cleaning of the environment is provided by Passmen who are part of the industrial cleaning party within HMP Castle Huntly. Training records are held by the cleaning party managers. A joint NHS and SPS cleaning schedule is used for environmental cleaning and outlines the daily tasks required. The cleaning products in use are brought to the health centre and made up for use by Passmen. We have been provided with details of the products in place and are seeking assurance from SPS that these products meet national guidance. It was confirmed after the visit that the products HMP Castle Huntly use are chlorine based. The standard of environmental cleaning in the health centre was very good. Frequently touched surfaces such as worktops and door handles are cleaned regularly by nursing staff.

All staff had access to and had received guidance on the correct use of PPE. There were challenges procuring PPE at the start of the pandemic, but since then there has been a sufficient stock of PPE in the establishment.

At the time of the liaison visit, staff were following HPS and NHS board guidance and attending emergencies as 'first responders only'. Senior management had put in place measures to support staff to adopt this guidance. Aerosol generating procedures are not undertaken in HMP Castle Huntly and staff do not require FFP3 masks. Staff were observed using the correct PPE at all times, and sign-posting was displayed throughout the residential areas and health centre outlining appropriate usage.

### **Governance, leadership and staffing**

The prison healthcare team is part of Perth & Kinross HSCP which falls within the remit of the Joint Integration Board. The Prison Healthcare Senior Nurse and Service Manager were active participants in the HSCP COVID-19 Silver & Bronze Command Groups directly reporting to NHS Tayside Silver and Gold Groups. During March-July 2020, daily COVID-19 contingency calls were held across Justice healthcare to identify and mitigate emerging issues; including staffing levels, absences and symptomatic patients or staff. Calls are now held weekly.

We saw evidence of a range of communications between the NHS board and the HSCP to discuss workforce, clinical demand and the allocation of resources. Staff reported that good supportive links were in place with the HSCP. Escalation and governance processes have been maintained during the pandemic supported by a clear reporting and governance structure with NHS Tayside to ensure effective accountability. A remobilisation plan is in place and is being followed.





The healthcare team is very small at HMP Castle Huntly, however they are continuing to provide a robust service. Healthcare staff from HMP Castle Huntly and HMP Perth work across both prison sites and support each other. Staff informed us that they also felt supported by senior management and communication was good. A temporary Senior Charge Nurse was appointed to provide on-site clinical leadership to the healthcare team.

NHS Tayside provides a range of mechanisms to support staff health and wellbeing. A 'chill out' room with distraction materials is available within the health centre for staff to take a break. Staff told us that they feel well supported by their line managers through the daily huddles and regular team meetings. Clinical supervision has continued as well as access to training opportunities.

A staff survey was carried out around the management of the pandemic and the results were shared with staff. The survey was repeated again in December 2020. This focused on how staff felt during the pandemic with and looked at how any improvements could be made. **This is good practice.**

The healthcare team described a positive working relationship with the SPS.

**Good Practice 7:** all mental health, occupational therapy and substance misuse patients were assessed against a 'red, amber, green' score to establish who would require contact during the pandemic. There is ongoing assessment of these patients to identify any change in risk levels.

**Good Practice 8:** a telephone appointment request system was in place and referrals are screened using a matrix to determine suitability for GP or nurse review based on clinical need.

**Good Practice 9:** in-possession medication is provided within HMP Castle Huntly and patients are assessed to manage their own medication, which promotes autonomy.

**Good Practice 10:** access to urgent on site occupational therapy assessment continued and routine referrals recommenced during wave one of the pandemic. The occupational therapy team also recommenced familiarisation visits for expected patient transfers who have complex needs which allowed for planning of aids and adaptations required.

**Good Practice 11:** the substance misuse and mental health team continued to accept referrals and offer assessment and treatment via telephone appointments, and if needed, face-to-face appointments were offered.

**Good Practice 12:** we saw signage on doors alerting staff of the maximum number of staff allowed inside the room.

**Good Practice 13:** staff surveys captured staff views on how the NHS board had managed the pandemic.

**Action Point 16:** NHS Tayside/HSCP must ensure the poster prompts for cleaning materials match the product in use.



## Liaison Visit Conclusion

HMP Castle Huntly is to be commended on being one of the last prison establishments in Scotland able to record no positive COVID-19 cases amongst its prison population. An open establishment, operating as a single household with unrestricted movement between buildings during the day, makes that achievement all the more impressive.

It is pleasing to see 13 areas of good practice highlighted by inspectors. We commend both staff and residents on the way they responded to the cancellation of much anticipated home leave over Christmas due to the reintroduction of national restrictions. We also commend residents on their continued forbearance with national restrictions that have limited the opportunities for outside placements and home leaves that would normally be such a feature of life in an open establishment. We hope that the opportunities provided by the lifting of national restrictions will be maximised fully and swiftly in the months ahead to help residents move forward.

We applaud the flexibility shown when providing opportunities for outside exercise and continuing access to prison library resources. HIS inspectors also identified a number of areas of good practice including continued access during the pandemic to substance misuse, mental health and occupational therapy support.

While applauding many aspects of the work done by the whole team at HMP Castle Huntly, we also identified a few areas where further action is desirable. We encourage management to consider the scope to reintroduce communal dining and if it can provide access to microwaves for use in the evening. We encourage greater access to additional visits, particularly at the weekend, whenever there is unused capacity, and we wish to see an immediate end to restrictions on the number of children allowed on a visit. SPS and Fife College should explore creative ways to encourage access to remote learning. We fully recognise the constraints imposed on the SPS by national COVID-19 restrictions. We nevertheless encourage HMP Castle Huntly to creatively review what more can be done to maximise opportunities for purposeful activity and access to indoor gym facilities for residents, along with opportunities to secure vocational training qualifications at unit or component level, and support the development of independent living skills.

We encourage urgent refurbishment of the holding cells and we question whether the size and number of accessible cells at HMP Castle Huntly is adequate. Moreover there is no doubt that substantial modernisation and refurbishment of the accommodation blocks, with development of single cell accommodation for the whole population, or investment in an alternative site, is essential in the longer-term if HMP Castle Huntly is to provide the sort of open estate experience that residents have a right to expect from a modern prison service.



**List of Action Points**

**Action Point 1:** HMP Castle Huntly may wish to consider reintroducing communal dining in some form, given that the whole estate is classed as one household and residents are mixing freely within residential areas.

**Action Point 2:** HMP Castle Huntly should consider the introduction of self-catering or, if not possible, access to small pantries including microwaves within the residential areas.

**Action Point 3:** HMP Castle Huntly should consider if the two accessible cells located in Bruce Wing are appropriate to accommodate residents with additional requirements and whether further provision of accessible cells is required.

**Action Point 4:** SPS - Substantial modernisation and improvement to the accommodation blocks is essential. A significant increase in the number of single cells is also needed; a full rebuild or alternative location should be considered to ensure modern single cell accommodation with in-cell toilet and showers for all residents.

**Action Point 5:** HMP Castle Huntly should look to keep all those placed in the ILU separate from each other to minimise the risk of contact with others leading to transmission of infection back into the rest of the establishment at the end of their period of isolation.

**Action Point 6:** SPS should urgently refurbish the holding cells so that they are suitable to hold prisoners even for a short period of time.

**Action Point 7:** HMP Castle Huntly should remove the limit on the number of children that can attend physical visits

**Action Point 8:** HMP Castle Huntly should consider increasing how many visits they allow prisoners to have, particularly at the weekend, as limiting residents to one per month could disadvantage those restricted to weekend visits due to their or family/friends work commitments.

**Action Point 9:** HMP Castle Huntly consider ways of reopening the Barista for take away beverages.

**Action Point 10:** SPS and Fife College should explore the options for the provision of remote access to learning and tutor support to assist in the provision of continuity to learning. For example, video links for real-time interactions and secure sharing of learning materials electronically to provide a more blended approach to learning.

**Action Point 11:** SPS and SG should review guidance for restrictions to access prison gyms and indoor PE spaces to take more account of the unique context within prisons overall and the settings of individual institutions. In particular with

HMP Castle Huntly operating as a single household the scope for increased access to the gym should be reviewed.

**Action Point 12:** HMP Castle Huntly prison staff should continue to review opportunities for purposeful activity to maximise opportunities for prisoners - particularly in the context of internal work parties but also in relation to opportunities for prisoners to develop independent living skills.

**Action point 13:** HMP Castle Huntly prison staff should explore opportunities arising in work parties to provide certification of basic vocational skills at unit or component level to provide prisoners with formal recognition of skills gained.

**Action Point 14:** HMP Castle Huntly should explore how they can maximise the opportunity for agencies to be available to prisoners due for release through video conferencing facilities for community-based agencies.

**Action Point 15:** With appropriate reference to the aspirational SHORE standards, HMP Castle Huntly should engage with local authorities to ensure that pre-release prisoners have more clarity about accommodation and housing prior to liberation.

**Action Point 16:** NHS Tayside/HSCP must ensure the poster prompts for cleaning materials match the product in use.

### **List of Good Practice**

**Good Practice 1:** we commend HMP Castle Huntly on being one of the last prison establishments in Scotland able to record no positive COVID-19 cases amongst those in its care, particularly given the transmission risks inherent within the operation of an open estate and 'single household' philosophy.

**Good Practice 2:** communication around planning and the eventual need to cancel home leave for residents over Christmas was handled particularly well, and we commend those staff who had to cancel their own leave arrangements to support more residents in the establishment over the festive period.

**Good Practice 3:** the Link Centre, and in particular its library, provided an excellent resource and it was encouraging that prisoners self-isolating could still get access to books.

**Good Practice 4:** prison staff, working closely with prisoners, have come up with flexible solutions to meeting the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions and their impact on purposeful activity. For example, through reconfiguring how access to a range of types and levels of PE and exercise can be provided and promoted to support the health and wellbeing of prisoners.

**Good Practice 5:** arrangements to maintain access to library resources and use of the prison TV channel, including prisoner involvement in their running, has made a significant positive contribution to prisoner wellbeing during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.

**Good Practice 6:** the PBSW team has been well supported by the local authority and the prison to fulfil its role in relation to key processes for progression. In addition to this, during the pandemic, they have been able to implement delivery of preparatory work with individuals eligible for the Caledonian programme. This programme addresses domestic abuse offending and individuals can engage with the programme on return to the community.

**Good Practice 7:** all mental health, occupational therapy and substance misuse patients were assessed against a 'red, amber, green' score to establish who would require contact during the pandemic. There is ongoing assessment of these patients to identify any change in risk levels.

**Good practice 8:** A telephone appointment request system was in place and referrals are screened using a matrix to determine suitability for GP or nurse review based on clinical need.

**Good Practice 9:** in-possession medication is provided within HMP Castle Huntly and patients are assessed to manage their own medication, which promotes autonomy.

**Good Practice 10:** access to urgent on site occupational therapy assessment continued and routine referrals recommenced during wave one of the pandemic. The occupational therapy team also recommenced familiarisation visits for expected patient transfers who have complex needs which allowed for planning of aids and adaptations required.

**Good Practice 11:** the substance misuse and mental health team continued to accept referrals and offer assessment and treatment via telephone appointments, and if needed, face-to-face appointments were offered.

**Good Practice 12:** we saw signage on doors alerting staff of the maximum number of staff allowed inside the room.

**Good Practice 13:** staff surveys captured staff views on how the NHS board had managed the pandemic.



## Acronyms used in this Report

<b>BBV</b>	Blood Borne Virus
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>CPT</b>	European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment
<b>GIC</b>	Governor-in-Charge
<b>GP</b>	General Practitioner
<b>HIS</b>	Healthcare Improvement Scotland
<b>HMCIPS</b>	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland
<b>HMIPS</b>	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
<b>HMP</b>	Her Majesty's Prison
<b>HSCP</b>	Health and Social Care Partnership
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>ICM</b>	Integrated Case Management
<b>ILU</b>	Independent Living Unit
<b>IPM</b>	Independent Prison Monitor
<b>LCRG</b>	Local Coronavirus Response Group
<b>NTE</b>	National Top End
<b>NPM</b>	National Preventive Mechanism
<b>OPCAT</b>	The Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
<b>PANEL</b>	Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination and equality, Empowerment, and Legality
<b>PBSW</b>	Prison Based Social Work
<b>PCF</b>	Prisoner Complaint Form
<b>PE</b>	Physical Education
<b>PIAC</b>	Prison Information and Action Committee
<b>PLH</b>	Prisoner Learning Hours
<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment
<b>PTI</b>	Physical Training Instructor
<b>RMT</b>	Risk Management Team
<b>SHORE</b>	Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone
<b>SMT</b>	Senior Management Team
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>SSOW</b>	Safe Systems of Work
<b>SPSO</b>	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
<b>SPOC</b>	Single Point of Contact
<b>SPS</b>	Scottish Prison Service
<b>SRU</b>	Separation and Reintegration Unit
<b>TTM</b>	Talk to Me





HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland is a member of the UK's National Preventive Mechanism, a group of organisations that independently monitor all places of detention to meet the requirements of international human rights law.  
<http://www.nationalpreventivemechanism.org.uk/>

© Crown copyright 2020

You may re-use this information (excluding logos and images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or e-mail: **psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk**.

This document is available on the HMIPS website  
<https://www.prisonsinspectoratescotland.gov.uk/>

First published by HMIPS, July 2021

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland  
Room Y1.4  
Saughton House  
Broomhouse Drive  
Edinburgh  
EH11 3XD

0131 244 8482