



**HMIPS**  
HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland  
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

**NEWS RELEASE**  
**INSPECTION OF HMP DUMFRIES**

HMP Dumfries was a high performing establishment and Inspectors were impressed by many aspects of the way the prison was managed and operated. Some aspects deserve particular praise:

Health Improvement Scotland Inspectors were particularly impressed by the focused work to prevent relapses with drug and alcohol issues, the support provided pre-liberation and arrangements for external health appointments.

Staff/prisoner relationships were almost universally considered to be positive. Additionally the relationships between the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and a wide range of partner agencies, most notably the NHS, were excellent. Prisoners felt safe and incidents of violence were very low indeed. Case management systems were robust.

The excellent peer mentor scheme operating in the rest of the prison should be extended to support the admission and induction arrangements.

Employment and training opportunities were of a good quality and available to untried prisoners, which is not often the case and most welcome. Inspectors were impressed by the 'Let's Cook' life skills programme and the outcomes it achieved. At the time of our inspection, 75% of those who had previously undertaken the course remained outside the prison system. Inspectors also welcomed the innovative work done with a local organisation to support dementia sufferers. Notably, despite its age, HMP Dumfries was one of the cleanest prisons HMIPS have ever visited.

Inevitably Inspectors found a number of areas where further improvements were needed, some as a direct consequence of the age of the buildings:

The lack of accessible cells for prisoners with disabilities was deeply concerning and needs addressed as quickly as possible by the SPS. Other areas that require upgrading include as a priority the Life Skills and Links Centre, facilities for Chaplaincy services and outdoor exercise areas. Development of a visitor centre would also be advantageous and in line with best practice elsewhere in the estate.

There were no offending behaviour programmes delivered locally, and offence focused work in general was very limited. Inspectors would like to see more creative approaches adopted by the SPS to providing offending behaviour opportunities locally and, as an interim measure, more research on the impact of having to transfer to access programmes.

The structures for Equality and Diversity (E&D) thinking were not yet embedded, with no robust E&D Action Plan in place at the time of the inspection. More could be done to promote understanding of other cultures and equality issues.

HMIPS recognises that some of the issues identified in this report have been overtaken or exacerbated by action the SPS has been obliged to take in response to COVID-19. HMIPS nevertheless hope that the SPS and the prison management team will reflect where action might be possible now, and that all recommendations can be addressed when the prison system is able to return to a more normal operating regime.

**Embargoed until 00:01 on Thursday 30 July 2020**

In conclusion, there is no doubt that HMP Dumfries was a safe and well run establishment, with strong visible leadership by the Senior Management Team, supported by dedicated and compassionate staff. HMP Dumfries can take pride in the positive endorsement of all their efforts that this report represents.

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

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

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