



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

**News Release**  
**Full Inspection of HMP Edinburgh**

The HMIPS 2019 inspection reported that HMP Edinburgh was a well-run, effective but very busy prison. With a solid performance by management and staff at all levels, managing one of the most complex mixes of prisoner population of any Scottish prison establishment.

In the intervening years HMP Edinburgh faced significant challenges not only with the impact of COVID-19 but also with high staff vacancies and staff absences. Despite this, HMIPS were disappointed not to find HMP Edinburgh in better shape, with explicit concerns about activities, time out of cell and the need for tighter assurance on use of force.

The prison appeared stuck in the unhappy position of not having enough staff available to run an adequate evening regime, and therefore trying to cram everything into the core day. This resulted in clashes between activities and entitlements, such as access to fresh air, leaving the majority of prisoners locked in their cells from 4.30pm onwards, exactly as they were during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the prison felt safe, a number of safety related issues worried the inspection team. As in the 2020 report, planned removals were still not always being properly recorded, and there was a shortfall in the number of staff whose Control and Restraint training was up-to-date. Regular cell searching was not consistent with good practice and a lack of control was evident in relation to the movement of prisoners.

The arrival of a new Governor-in-Charge and Deputy Governor, however, provides an opportunity to shift that dynamic, address any issues with rostering and shift pattern that may be inhibiting progress, and re-energise and reinvigorate efforts to reintroduce a more productive regime.

There were a number of examples of good practice to report. These included an impressive peer mentor system for new admissions and a robust local induction process.

We also commend the Physical Training Instructors on the relationships developed with partners in the community to arrange football themed events that brought families together and gave prisoners the opportunity to spend time with their children.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland inspectors identified examples of good practice, including a system for fast tracking patients onto Opium Substitution Therapy, and the use of 'Change Grow Live' caseworkers to support people on liberation. They also praised the training of SPS night staff in how to administer naloxone and the work alongside SPS colleagues to develop a trauma informed practice strategy.

Accommodation noticeably varied; while the newer accommodation in Ratho Hall was of a high standard, the remand hall of Glenesk was of much poorer quality. Many cells in Level 3 had missing toilet seats and ventilation was a problem in some cells due to blocked vents.

As with many of our inspection reports, we strongly urge timely access to programmes essential to rehabilitation, and assurance that short-term prisoners who meet the criteria are considered for progression to HMP Castle Huntly.

**Embargoed until 00:01 on Thursday 14 March 2024**

In conclusion, the new Senior Management Team are faced with some difficult and long-standing challenges in allowing the prison to recover from its very restricted COVID-19 regime. The management team, with the support of SPS headquarters, needs to provide a fuller regime whilst tackling some of the safety related issues identified by inspectors. Both issues will require serious management effort and support with ensuring the prison has the staffing complement necessary to deliver effectively.

#### **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.prisoninspectorscotland.gov.uk](http://www.prisoninspectorscotland.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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