



HMIPS
HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

News Release
Full Inspection of HMP Greenock

The most striking feature of HMP Greenock was the excellent staff/prisoner relationships. Eighty-two percent of respondents to our prisoner pre-inspection survey said they were treated with respect by staff all or most of the time. Good relationships between the SPS and NHS teams undoubtedly contributed towards this and 84% of prisoners telling us they felt safe all or most of the time.

There was a similarly pro-active approach to health and safety within the prison, and inspectors could see that significant efforts had been made to address the issue of dampness in the cells and physical deterioration to other parts of infrastructure that we highlighted in previous reports. Although the number of cells out of action through dampness had reduced considerably; it is however too soon to assess the long-term durability and effectiveness of the treatment and repainting work carried out.

Nevertheless we must record continuing concerns on the fabric and condition of the buildings; robust solutions to the issues of the leak-prone roof and kitchen ventilation and flooring have still not been secured, despite further investment being promised after our previous visit findings.

The connectivity between the prison and external partners was outstanding. A number of initiatives were at an early stage but appeared geared up to deliver positive results. Similarly, the 'Moving On' initiative will allow people to begin substance use and trauma recovery work in HMP Greenock prior to release, with follow-on support in the community facilitated by Inverclyde Council justice services.

One of the most encouraging outcomes of the inspection was the confidence that Health Improvement Scotland had in the quality of the healthcare being delivered. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's prison healthcare team benefited from operating without any vacancies at the time of the inspection, which unfortunately we do not see in many other Scottish prisons. Not surprisingly, optimum staffing levels enhanced service delivery and supported patients to access services.

There was an insufficient number and range of work opportunities and there was scope to be more imaginative and achieve more with the limited work shed floor space available in the prison. Similarly, attendance levels in the Learning Centre were low and a more proactive approach to promoting the Learning Centre would be beneficial.

As we have seen in many other establishments a more robust approach to promoting and safeguarding Equality and Diversity would be desirable, in particular a more proactive approach to the use of translation services to support foreign nationals with limited understanding of English.

While it was clear that violence levels were not excessive, and individual incidents of violence were being reviewed for learning and intelligence gathering, there was no formal violence reduction strategy and only limited awareness of the SPS Anti-bullying Strategy - Think Twice.

The two Community Integration Units were underused, and it is HMIPS opinion that this is a missed opportunity for the SPS. There were also continuing and unacceptable delays in prisoners progressing through their sentences. This was a major frustration for prisoners in

the National Top End facility in HMP Greenock; Chrisswell House. Similarly the lack of access to national accredited programmes within HMP Greenock that are essential to some people's progression plans is a further and understandable frustration for those held there. This must be addressed with urgency.

In conclusion, we are pleased that there were many positive findings to record from our inspection of HMP Greenock. The Governor was both visible and approachable. Most of the management team were relatively new in post and had made a good start to consolidating on what was there before and taking the prison forward. Undoubtedly their key asset is the compassionate caring staff, and the excellent relationships they have developed with prisoners. However, despite the welcome investment that has been made by the SPS over the years, for example on a more modern visits room, HMP Greenock remains a Victorian prison ill-suited to the demands of a modern prison system. There is still a compelling case for securing a modern replacement prison, preferably in the same locality. That might support a seamless transition of staff, and the excellent prison culture they have developed, into a prison designed for the 21st century and geared up to provide appropriate opportunities more easily for work and rehabilitative activity.

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
3. For further information please contact Kerry Love, Business Manager, at Kerry.Love@gov.scot or on 07939 980452.

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