



HMIPS
HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

News Release
Full Inspection of HMP Perth

In relation to the nine standards for Inspecting and Monitoring Prisons in Scotland used to inspect HMP Perth, seven were assessed as satisfactory and two as generally acceptable. With strong management and a committed staff group both in the SPS and NHS, this is a sound and encouraging inspection report.

Parts of the establishment date back to the 19th century whilst others were rebuilt more recently. The buildings were well maintained but the fabric of the older buildings reflected their age, and in some cases did not provide fit-for-purpose facilities.

There were two areas where the age and design of the building raised deep concerns; the small cells in A and B Hall that housed two prisoners in cramped conditions. The Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) prescribes a minimum cell size (excluding sanitation) for a double cell with two people as 8m². This is the internationally recognised minimum standard to ensure that the conditions of detention themselves do not constitute a form of ill-treatment. By this standard, shared cells for example on B Hall were well below the minimum standard of space. Inspectors measured the double cells in B Hall as only 6.74m² after the deduction of 0.82m² for the toilet area, barely meeting the requirements of a single cell. This is an urgent issue that must be addressed.

One concern stood out where management, staff and prisoners reported to inspectors their concerns and anxieties in relation to prisoner use of illicit substances. The recent introduction of drone technology to deliver large quantities of contraband was a step change and clearly reversing the positive effect felt with the introduction of photocopying mail.

We were particularly pleased to see the proactive approach taken by the Governor and Health and Social Care Partnership to robustly address both the supply and demand elements of substance misuse. Seen as good practice, HMP Perth had been a pilot site for implementing the Medication Assisted Treatment Standards to ensure safe, accessible, and high-quality treatment.

The recovery hub was a welcome initiative and had a number of groups and resources that prisoners could access, delivered in partnership with agencies led by individuals with a lived experience of substance use. We were impressed by the data correlation between violence and those being managed or considered at risk of substance misuse, supported by the daily 'Person of Concern' meetings that involved multi-stakeholders in managing vulnerable prisoners.

We were encouraged by the two new employment initiatives, offering real life training, accreditation, and the possibility of employment on release and look forward to hearing updates on its success. We were interested to hear of the staff engagement initiatives, including a pilot where officers led groups of prisoners in evening activities. This was designed to increase interaction and was still in its infancy.

The Governor-in-Charge (GIC) and Senior Management Team (SMT) had a very positive approach to engagement with community justice and other local partner organisations, seeking opportunities to explain about the work of the prison and consider ways in which the prison could support community initiatives and promote a successful reintegration back into

community. The family-centred approach to visits and positive working relationship with the Visitor Centre was also welcomed.

The willingness to have those with lived experience of prisons work in the prison and support those with addictions was impressive. However, the lack of accredited programmes and scope to improve the capacity for bespoke interventions that would support a prisoner's transition was of concern.

In conclusion, despite the issues mentioned, HMP Perth was an establishment that did many things to a high standard. Relationships throughout the prison were largely positive and respectful and contributed the sense of safety and good order that was evident during the inspection.

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

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