



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

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **INSPECTION OF COURT CUSTODY PROVISION, DUNDEE SHERIFF COURT ON 1 JUNE 2020**

This report is part of a programme of liaison visits to Court Custody Units (CCUs) carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS) during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. The visits are being conducted under HMIPS' new, albeit temporary, [Liaison Visits Framework - Prison and Court Custody Units](#), published in April 2020. These liaison visit reports 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.

Custodies were offered hand sanitiser on arrival at the CCU and were asked two questions in respect of COVID-19. These questions covered general health and safety and ensured awareness of the government's physical distancing rules. Where the custody was not aware they were advised accordingly.

Currently the CCU allowed cell sharing, with the majority of the cells holding two custodies and one cell holding three custodies. On inspection it was felt that the cells at Dundee CCU were too small to hold two or more custodies and still maintain physical distancing. HMIPS also noted that no CCU staff or SCTS cleaners attended to clean the cells between occupants. All cells in the CCU should be single occupancy with phased management of custodies and the cells should routinely be cleaned between occupants.

It was seen that there was tape markings on the floor of the CCU corridors to show the two metre social distancing rule, which encouraged staff to physically distance. As part of the daily staff briefing, the CCU Manager reminded staff to wear masks and gloves as a minimum when working in the CCU.

Inspectors were made aware that since COVID-19 no additional cleaning was being carried out in the CCU. Additional cleaning by the SCTS contract cleaners should be carried out whenever possible. Staff confirmed that they did not clean the interview rooms with antiseptic wipes between uses, which was a task that was carried out in many other CCUs. Staff should start doing this as a priority.

Both toilets had a sanitary bin but there were no information posters giving advice on how to obtain sanitary products. These should be displayed as soon as possible.

In relation to how custodies were brought to the court by CCU staff, it had been agreed that if the assessment of risk was high, cuffs and long chains were used so staff could maintain a safe distance from the custody. If the assessment of risk was low, custodies were not cuffed and were accompanied by two members of staff. This was deemed by Inspectors to be good practice.

Due to ongoing refurbishment the direct route from the police cells to the CCU had been cordoned off. Inspectors followed the route taken by custodies and it was seen that they

would all pass by the police observation cell, which at the time of the visit was occupied by a female custody on constant observations, by two police officers.

HMIPS regard this as inappropriate as it affected the dignity and increased the vulnerability of the female custody under observation. HMIPS would urge the SCTS to complete the refurbishment work at the earliest opportunity and as a priority to prevent this current necessity.

#### **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.