



HMIPS

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

NEWS RELEASE

HMIPS ANNUAL REPORT 2017 - 2018

David Strang QPM the outgoing HM Chief Inspector of Prisons commented that “We should never take for granted the good order that is maintained in Scotland’s prisons and that they are in generally stable and secure environments.

It is a fundamental requirement of a well-run prison that people who live and work there should feel confident in its stability and order. Across the prisons we have inspected this year, prisoners have generally told me that they feel safe.

One of the key factors affecting the atmosphere in a prison is the quality of relationships between prisoners and those who work in prison. Throughout the year I continued to be impressed with the commitment of staff and their ability to care for and protect prisoners, a substantial proportion of whom are vulnerable.

As a country, we have much to be proud of in how our prisons are run. I am convinced that the regular monitoring of prisons by IPMs and the professional inspecting of prisons make a significant contribution to improving the treatment and conditions for people in prison.

During the year Independent Prison Monitors undertook 945 prison visits amassing 5,177 hours of scrutiny within Scottish prisons, an impressive contribution from the team of unpaid volunteers

I would like to mention the valuable and effective service, provided by Throughcare Support Officers whose work has made a significant contribution to the successful resettlement of prisoners on release. Their service included support in the important areas of housing, welfare benefits and healthcare.

Of particular note during this reporting year, were the creative service level agreements, developed by HMP Greenock, with a number of housing partners to provide better housing options for prisoners on release; a significant factor in preventing reoffending. This sort of community engagement should be the norm across all of Scotland’s prisons, local authorities and housing providers.

Whilst acknowledging all that is good it is also important to identify areas for improvement.

Healthcare

Barriers to good healthcare came from a number of sources. Staffing levels in health centres were sometimes inadequate, compounded by high levels of staff turnover and problems recruiting. This meant that sometimes basic levels of healthcare were not provided to patients.

Unsatisfactory variations in prescribing practices, including access to opiate replacement therapy, was inconsistent between prisons and often did not reflect good practice established in the community.

Progression

Increasingly, we find that a significant number of prisoners are not able to progress appropriately through their sentence due to a lack of availability of, or capacity within, treatment programmes. There are lengthy waiting lists for many key programmes, which means that a substantial number of prisoners are not able to complete the required programmes for them to be considered for parole. Of perhaps greater concern is that prisoners are at risk of being released into the community without having completed treatment programmes designed to reduce future reoffending.

Women

The number of women held in custody on the 31 March 2018 was 380. Given that the new configuration of the female custodial estate will provide only 230 places, much work is still required to reduce the numbers in custody, ahead of the new prison opening in 2020.

NPS

One growing concern relates to the reported increase in the use of NPS. Prisoners and staff told us that they were anxious about the unpredictable behaviour which the use of NPS has led to, creating heightened concerns about personal safety and well-being. This is not an emerging issue solely within the prisons we inspected this year; it is one that is becoming more evident in a number of Scottish prisons. SPS should consider undertaking more research into the impact of NPS within their establishments.

Population Management

The SPS has for some time been reviewing the management of its overall population, particularly older prisoners, those convicted of sexual offences and prisoners held on remand. At present there are too many people held in prisons where there are insufficient places for those categories of prisoners, resulting in restricted regimes or a lack of suitable programmes.”

Wendy Sinclair-Gieben said:

“The annual report is a visual reminder of the importance of monitoring and inspection in bringing benefits of public scrutiny and assurance. In my tenure I hope to build on the excellent work of the previous inspectors and continue to provide valuable insights into the conditions and treatment of people in custody, as well as highlighting much of the excellent work that already exists within prisons

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. HM CHIEF INSPECTOR OF PRISONS – WENDY SINCLAIR-GIEBEN was appointed to the post of HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland in July 2018.
2. On publication this report can be found at www.prisoninspectoratescotland.gov.uk
3. For further information please contact Kerry Love, Business Manager, at Kerry.Love@gov.scot or on 0131 244 8484.

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