



HMIPS

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

NEWS RELEASE

LIAISON VISIT TO HMP GLENOCHIL 2-3 DECEMBER 2020

This report is part of a programme of liaison visits of prisons carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS) during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency and was conducted under HMIPS' new, albeit temporary, [Liaison Visits Framework for Prisons 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.

It is commendable that at the time of our visit HMP Glenochil was coping well with the significant challenges around COVID-19 transmission risks and had taken robust action to manage these risks. In general there was good awareness amongst both staff and prisoners about the processes and action needed to keep everyone safe. Communication with prisoners and with staff was also perceived positively by nearly everyone with whom inspectors spoke. Staff absence rates were also reducing at the time of our visit, with the prison benefitting from effective absence management processes. It is commendable too that inspectors identified seven elements of good practice for sharing with other establishments.

However, a number of action points were also identified. Of particular concern was the need for HMP Glenochil and Clackmannanshire Council to quickly resolve issues around the capacity of the Prison-based Social Work team, to ensure the team could fulfil its role with regard to timeous completion of assessments and reports. The SPS and HMP Glenochil similarly need to develop a coherent plan to maximise availability and delivery of offender management programmes and address the assessment and programme backlog.

Although sympathising with the exceptional challenges in having to comply with COVID-19 related restrictions, which unfortunately have only intensified since our visit in response to revised national guidance, we must nevertheless record our concern about the lack of employment and training opportunities available to prisoners. There was much to welcome about the work done by the Physical Training Instruction team, but we would wish to see fair access for all prisoner groups to the gymnasium. There is also need for a safer place for staff to change into and out of PPE in Abercrombie Hall.

While commending NHS Forth Valley and HMP Glenochil on the good practice demonstrated by their teams, we urge them to work together to find solutions to improve capacity within the health centre and reduce patient waiting times for access to primary care services. A number of action points also refer to the need for joint action by HMP Glenochil and the NHS team, for example to ensure the cleanliness of key areas of the prison and the safe dispensing and storage of medication.

Finally, in paying tribute to the commitment and dedication of staff in all teams, and applauding the constructive working relationships between SPS and NHS teams, we must record that both NHS and SPS staff expressed concern about COVID-19 fatigue and the ongoing impact of trying to provide a good service in these extremely difficult times.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, was appointed in July 2018.

Embargoed until 00:01 on Wednesday 24 March 2021

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.