



HMIPS

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

NEWS RELEASE

LIAISON VISIT TO HMP KILMARNOCK ON 24 JUNE 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.

The prison was clean, calm and orderly, and the prison management team are to be congratulated on the way they rose to address the additional challenges created by COVID-19.

In light of COVID-19, and the advice received from Health Protection Scotland, the prison was running an extremely limited regime. Time out of cell was longer than we have seen in recent liaison visits to other prisons and, although purposeful activity had reduced dramatically in response to COVID-19, HMIPS welcomed that the prison had started action to increase purposeful activity. Planning to commence work parties and education services and a clear commitment to continue to increase recreation time safely was viewed very positively. In addition HMP Kilmarnock were planning to increase the range and type of qualifications on offer to better support rehabilitation and entry into employment. We welcome this ambitious agenda and look forward to hearing more about the progress for this on our next full inspection.

The arrival of in-cell telephony and video visit technology was imminent and will radically improve participation in family life. Communication with prisoners appeared good.

Inspectors were unable to source information around COVID -19 in a language other than English. However the prison appeared to be giving due consideration to equality and diversity issues in most areas with most notices translated on the ATM style kiosks.

Whilst acknowledging that HMP Kilmarnock were providing more time out of cell than we had seen on previous liaison visits, along with allowing prisoners access to a phone while isolated under rule 41 (COVID-19), there is still a tension between the rights set out under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the restrictions having to be imposed.

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.