



HMIPS

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

NEWS RELEASE
INSPECTION OF COURT CUSTODY PROVISION, KIRKCALDY SHERIFF COURT
ON 27 AUGUST 2018

Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court sits within the Sheriffdom of Tayside, Central and Fife, one of six Sheriffdoms in Scotland.

Wendy Sinclair-Gieben said:

HMIPS found the Court Custody Unit (CCU) at Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court to be a well-run facility with staff that were clearly well-motivated, well-led and working well as a team. It was evident that individual team members supported each other, and were operating with a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve.

Staff reported a good relationship with partner agencies. This reflected positively on the attitude and approach of the G4S staff and that of the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service (SCTS) staff, Police Scotland and the other partner agencies. Inspectors witnessed a good example of a collaborative, respectful and professional working relationship between G4S and Police Scotland.

Good order within the CCU was largely a product of good relationships with the prisoners and a respect for the staff working within them. Whilst the CCU was clean and orderly, it would benefit from some decoration and maintenance. SCTS should review the area, redecorate and replace as necessary.

Additionally, we would ask that the privacy arrangements for those utilising the toileting facilities be reviewed to ensure that they are adequate and appropriate, to maintain personal dignity whilst providing the necessary level of security.

The disabled access and toilet facilities within the Court gave cause for some concern and should be reviewed and updated with some urgency. It is concerning that a disabled prisoner would need to access a public area, significantly affecting the safety and security for all concerned. It also exposes the prisoner to a degree of public access that is inappropriate. This situation should be addressed as soon as possible.

Finally, and more generally, inspectors became increasingly aware that a significant number of individuals spend long periods of time secured in the CCU. The lengthy periods are, in large part, a product of the requirements of the escorting contract. HMIPS questions why it is a requirement to have all prisoners arrive at the CCUs by 09:30, when it is known that many individuals will not be required in court until the afternoon. This situation means that CCUs are busier, more disruptive, and potentially pose a higher risk than is necessary.

The terms of the contract should be reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of the courts, the Scottish Prison Service, Police Scotland, and the prisoners in a more equitable manner. To illustrate an example of this; an individual prisoner could be placed in a G4S vehicle at 07:30, then spend until 15:00 or later in a holding cell, and potentially not return to prison until 20:00.

HMIPS would like to see a better utilisation of resources and time e.g. wider use of video-conferencing facilities, and a smarter approach to prisoner transportation.

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. This report identifies what we found during our inspection on 27 August 2018.
3. On publication the report can be found at www.prisonsinspectoratescotland.gov.uk
4. For further information please contact Kerry Love, Business Manager, at Kerry.Love@gov.scot or on 0131 244 8484.

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