



HMIPS

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

**NEWS RELEASE
INSPECTION OF THE COURT CUSTODY PROVISION,
EDINBURGH SHERIFF COURT
18 JUNE 2018**

“The Court Custody Unit (CCU) in Edinburgh Sheriff Court was found to be a well-run facility with staff that were clearly well motivated, well led and worked 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.

Police Scotland should ensure that those arriving from police custody are appropriately dressed for the journey and their subsequent court appearance. It was concerning to observe prisoners being removed from escort vans in their nightclothes and one prisoner appeared to be in his underwear and one prisoner had no footwear. It is unacceptable that individuals are expected to appear in a court of law in their underwear or nightclothes.

The management and control of Personal Escort Records (PERs) was undertaken with great diligence and care, and the details contained within them were regularly updated. This is particularly important as they contain critical information regarding the prisoners presenting risks to themselves or others, developing issues, or their attendance at court.

One aspect that requires immediate clarification relates to the provision of medical information. Inspectors were informed that CCU staff had previously received a ‘health management plan’ from Police Scotland, but this had ceased some months ago. The escort contractor and the SPS’ contract monitoring unit must review this situation as a matter of some urgency, to ensure that custody staff have the information they require for the safe management of individuals in their care.

Finally, to allow people to access their rights they need to know and understand their rights. If English is not their first language or they have limited communication skills they are entitled to support appropriate to their needs, in order that they understand why they are at court, what the process will be and the outcome of their court appearance. In order to achieve this, staff at the court must have ready access to and the authority to access the appropriate services.”

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 18 June 2018. On publication the report can be found at www.prisoninspectorscotland.gov.uk
3. For further information please contact Kerry Love, Head of Prison Inspection and Monitoring Co-ordination, at dorothy.halliday@gov.scot or on 0131 244 8482.