



**HMIPS**

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland  
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **WHO CARES? A FOLLOW-UP REVIEW OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF OLDER PRISONERS IN SCOTLAND'S PRISONS 2020**

This review follows on from our 2017 report [Who Cares ? The Lived Experience Of Older Prisoners In Scotland's Prisons](#).

This report highlights some of the differences, and continuities, which we found; the changing context in terms of institutions and attitudes; those things the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) have achieved, and some of those we anticipate require more work in the future.

The 2017 report made reference to the growing number of older prisoners in custody which had 'increased in one year by a fifth'. Three years later in 2020, the number of older prisoners in Scotland's prisons has further increased by 46%. This is a rise from 280 prisoners in custody over the age of 60 in 2017, to 405 prisoners over the age of 60 in 2020.

This stark increase shows that the prison population is changing in Scotland and some decisive action is required to meet the complex social care and rehabilitative needs of this aging population.

The pressures of trying to find suitable accommodation is even more challenging than it was in 2017, as the number of older prisoners with mobility issues has continued to grow. This report recognises that the population pressure on the prison system as a whole, inhibits access to the limited accessible cellular accommodation.

Access to offending behaviour programmes for this group of prisoners was reported in 2017 as particularly difficult, with many prisoners saying that they did not wish to be transferred a long distance from their 'home' establishment. Some 95% of this population did not take part in offending behaviour programmes. This has a consequential effect on those applying for parole and progression, creating a bottleneck in closed prisons and importantly indicates that people being released into the community at the end of their sentence may not have undertaken any work to reduce their risk.

There are however examples of good practice that are worth replicating across the estate. The generally positive view that older prisoners have of relationships with SPS staff and Personal Care staff is to be commended. The early scoping work for new build accommodation offers encouragement that solutions to a rising population of older people are being considered.

Concerns nevertheless remain that the culture is not fully embedded that takes account of the specific additional needs of older prisoners. The regime design does not always take account of the complex needs of older prisoners to allow them to take up opportunities for visits, exercise, and outdoor recreation.

Development of a new national strategy for the housing, care, and support of older prisoners should be prioritised by the SPS, which takes account of the growth in numbers and the shift in attitudes amongst this cohort of the prison population.

**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.prisonssinspectoratescotland.gov.uk](http://www.prisonssinspectoratescotland.gov.uk)
3. For further information please contact Kerry Love, Business Manager, at [Kerry.Love@gov.scot](mailto:Kerry.Love@gov.scot) or on 07939 980452.