



# HMIPS

HM INSPECTORATE OF  
PRISONS FOR SCOTLAND

INSPECTING AND MONITORING

# REPORT ON RETURN VISIT TO HMP SHOTTS

29 MARCH 2018

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## **Introduction**

I stated in my introduction to the report on the full inspection of HMP Shotts, undertaken between 21 August and 1 September 2017, that:

*“In relation to the provision of learning opportunities in HMP Shotts, we will revisit the prison with colleagues from Education Scotland in 2018, to assess the impact of the change in education contract provider.”*

This report is based on our findings during that return visit, supported by our partners in Education Scotland, which was undertaken on 29 March 2018.

What was immediately evident was the effort that had been made by Fife College and HMP Shotts to address the concerns raised during the full inspection.

This report sets out the findings from HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS) and Education Scotland’s return visit to HMP Shotts. The report focusses solely on the education provision, provided by Fife College, within the establishment. The report is structured around the relevant Quality Indicators (QIs) within the Standards for Inspecting and Monitoring Prisons in Scotland.

## **My Conclusion**

The difference in the provision in education since the last inspection was significant, and Fife College should take full credit for the work that they have undertaken. Whilst the improvement in provision is clear to see, there is still significant room for improvement. This is acknowledged by Fife College management who have clear plans in place to continue to take things forward.

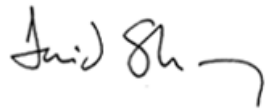
However, there is the need for the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to review the processes they had in place for the change in provider, as the impact on prisoner learning has been significant in HMP Shotts, and the other establishments affected by the change. It would not be unfair to say that as a result of the changeover, the delivery of recognised qualifications all but ceased, and access to education for the prisoner group was extensively affected for a period in excess of six months. Lessons need to be learned from this process.

Finally and more generally, the need to ensure that prisoners leaving custody are prepared for the modern world by having access to digital life skill training, whilst in prison, is an urgent requirement and one HMIPS challenges the Scottish Government and the SPS to develop as a matter of urgency.

## **Next Steps**

This report identifies a number of areas where significant progress has been made, and other areas where improvements are still outstanding. However, it is clear that the staff and management in HMP Shotts are working to a plan, and that they have the support needed to ensure that the changes already made are sustained, and that any future changes are sustainable. All parties involved should take credit for the manner in which they have approached the task they were set.

HMIPS will continue to monitor the progress in HMP Shotts, through regular monitoring visits undertaken by Independent Prison Monitors and inspectors.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Strang', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Strang  
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

13<sup>th</sup> June 2018

## Inspection Findings

### **Quality Indicator - There is an appropriate and sufficient range of employment and training opportunities available to prisoners.**

1. There was a significant drop in prisoners gaining certificates for Food Hygiene and REHIS, and no employability certificates were available to prisoners in the Fitness Centre. The prison has credible plans in place to introduce SQA awards through the Fitness Centre, in partnership with Fife College. This would provide opportunities for prisoners to gain certificates in two Exercise and Fitness awards and one Nutrition, Health and Wellbeing award.
2. The prison had commenced an initiative to provide access to learning activities, supported by Learning Centre staff, within the Bicycle Repair workshop. A few prisoners had participated in educational activities at SCQF level 3-6 for Communications and Numeracy, within the context of this work party. This provided an opportunity for prisoners who did not normally attend the Learning Centre to engage in contextualised learning and develop their core skills.

### **Quality Indicator - There is an appropriate and sufficient range of educational, including physical and health educational, activities available to the prisoners.**

3. The Learning Centre had resolved previous staffing and resource issues, and was delivering the planned range of learning activities. There were 44 classes timetabled each week compared with 25 classes during the inspection week. Notably, Information Communications Technology (ICT) at SCQF levels 3-7 classes were re-instated, and prisoners had access to appropriate equipment and learning materials. Prisoners also had the opportunity to study e-learning courses, and the prison had piloted an e-portfolio with a few prisoners. However, there was no provision for prisoners to study and gain confidence in digital life skills prior to their release.
4. Most of the classes available to prisoners were in Communications and Literacy (43%), ICT (15%) and Creative Art (11%). The number of classes available to prisoners for mathematics had doubled since the inspection week. Learning Centre staff continued to provide core skills learning activities for prisoners in the residential halls, and had begun supporting prisoners with their core skills in the Bicycle Repair workshop. Based on the timetable provided for the week of the return visit, a limited number of timetabled classes in other subjects were available, which included creative writing and digital music. Art therapy had recently been introduced as an option in the Learning Centre. However, the instrumental music class had been replaced with digital music and few prisoners found this option appealing.
5. There were good opportunities for prisoners to contribute to the editing and production of the high quality national STIR magazine and in-house magazine Snapshots, along with activities to support the Prisoner Information Channel. A few prisoners engaged in project based learning activities; however these prisoners were not fully aware of the overall purpose of this project work.

6. Over the last three years, the number of certificates awarded to prisoners through the Learning Centre had declined by around 50% (from 422 to 224) and only eight qualifications had been achieved by prisoners in the past six months.

7. Overall, based on the evidence provided, the variety and level of educational programmes on offer was not sufficient to provide all prisoners with the choice and depth of subjects for progression beyond basic levels, or meet the needs of specific prisoners.

**Quality Indicator - All purposeful activities provided are of good quality and encourage the engagement of prisoners. Prisoners are consulted in planning the activities offered.**

8. Previously, the regular prisoner surveys and annual Portfolio Review which had been carried out to engage prisoners in planning and evaluating the learning provision had not been completed since 2015.

9. The Learning Centre did seek the input of the prisoners. However, the prisoners consulted would like to be more involved in the consultation process and receive feedback. The involvement of the prisoners in a meaningful engagement and consultation process should help to inform the development of a focussed and relevant curriculum.

**Quality Indicator - The scheduling of activities and individual prisoner's access to them is organised so that each prisoner takes part in the activities agreed for them.**

10. No activities were scheduled to engage prisoners in learning activities on Friday afternoons or at weekends. However, there are national plans to extend the number of sessions available for prisoners to 10 sessions per week.

11. Participation rates by prisoners at timetabled classes in the Learning Centre had improved with an average attendance of over 60%, an increase of more than 12%. However, non-attendance at scheduled classes continued to affect the number of prisoners attending learning activities, with 50% of this non-attendance attributed to 'refusal to attend classes'.

**Quality Indicator - Prisoners are afforded access to a library which is well-stocked with materials that take account of the cultural and religious backgrounds of the prisoner population.**

12. The library contained a good range of non-fiction titles and DVDs, along with a few foreign language texts, large print books, audiobooks and reading material for prisoners with additional support needs. The library book stock was refreshed on a quarterly basis and prisoners had access to the wider catalogue of the Library Services. Recent improvements to the library partnership and the re-instatement of a qualified librarian post had created a more vibrant atmosphere for prisoners attending the library. The improved approach to book displays and promotions engaged prisoners more effectively. A few prisoners engaged in a Book Group which had been organised to involve prisoners in discussion about literacy and allow them to express their opinions.

13. Library staff, supported by a passman, had access to dedicated software that provided accurate records for borrowing levels. This information indicated that prisoners were borrowing on average more than 100 items from the library each week.

**Quality Indicator - Prisoners are afforded access to participate in recreational, self-help or peer-support activities relevant to a wide range of interests and abilities.**

14. The prison is in the early stages of introducing a Peer Tutor qualification and recognises that peer tutoring across the prison requires improvement. The aim is to utilise peer tutors to reach out to those prisoners who do not currently engage with the Learning Centre or other learning activities.

**Inspection Team**

Jim Farish, Deputy Chief Inspector of Prisons

Ian Beach, Education Scotland



**Acronymns**

HMIPS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
ICT	Information Communication Technology
QI	Quality Indicator
REHIS	Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SPS	Scottish Prison Service
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority



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