

# HM Chief Inspector's Annual Report 2023-24





# HM Chief Inspector's Annual Report 2023-24

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland

Laid before the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Ministers

August 2024

SG/2024/148

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>02</b>
■ Foreword by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland	03
<b>2. Our Vision, Our Values, Our Strategic Ambition</b>	<b>07</b>
■ Our Vision	08
■ Our Values	08
■ Our Strategic Ambition	08
<b>3. Our Key Partners</b>	<b>09</b>
■ Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)	10
■ Education Scotland	10
■ Care Inspectorate	10
■ Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC)	10
■ Children & Young People’s Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS)	10
<b>4. The Year in Brief</b>	<b>11</b>
■ Summary of Work Undertaken	12
■ The UK National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)	13
<b>5. Scrutiny</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>6. Strategic Challenges for the Criminal Justice System</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>7. Monitoring</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>8. HMIPS Priorities for 2024-25</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>9. Staff and Finances</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>10. Annexes</b>	<b>37</b>
■ Annex A	38
■ Independent Prison Monitoring Regions and Annual Reports	38
■ Annex B	41
■ 2024-25 Planned Scrutiny	41

# 1. Introduction



**Wendy Sinclair-Gieben**  
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

## Foreword by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

As I prepare to demit office on 31 August 2024, this will be my sixth and final annual report.

Over the past decades, there has been increasing emphasis on human rights and a recognition globally of the need for strengthened transparency and independent monitoring of places of detention. Prisons pose unique challenges for the promotion of human dignity, far from public view and containing people who garner little public sympathy; the tensions of balancing safety and human rights were then exacerbated during a lengthy pandemic, and are now compromised by overcrowding.

Moreover without scrutiny, as we have pointed out before, it is all too easy for even well-intentioned staff to become subconsciously complacent or start to accept standards that in any other setting would be unacceptable.

Scotland has invested hugely in the prison estate in the last 25 years; the building of two prisons run by the private sector, two new prisons run by the public sector and the recent build of a new women's prison and two community custody units are testimony to the commitment to hold in safe and secure custody those sent by the courts.

Despite this welcome investment there is one particular issue with far reaching consequences that I and my predecessors have consistently reported on: the stubbornly entrenched issue of overcrowding in Scotland's prisons. The high numbers in Scotland's prisons and the issues that it causes are sadly not unexpected and remain a serious concern.

Matthew Parris, Author at the Spectator magazine wrote on 30 March 2024 that Britain's prisons shame us all and claims that future generations will be "aghast at the blind eye we turn to the abuse, the numbers and the futility of prisons", and will compare it to the perplexity we feel about child labour in the Victorian era before the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury campaigner's achievements in the reform of child-labour legislation and the lunacy laws.

Last year I quoted Charles Hill, the former Governor in HMP Edinburgh who stated in 1979 that there was no indication that the overcrowding problem will diminish. His predictions were sadly all too accurate. In 2020 I warned The Scottish Parliament that: "The choice is stark – either we put fewer people in prison, or we recognise that we have to pay for the prison population that we do have." In 2024, Scotland reached a crisis point with a prison population far in excess of the ability for the Scottish Prison Service to provide a humane, rehabilitative experience.

Victims and the general public have the right to expect that prisons will hold securely and safely those sent to them by the courts. But they also have the right to expect that whilst in custody their criminogenic behaviours will be addressed. This cannot happen with the large complex population the Scottish Prison Service is required to hold. This is not new, put simply, there have been and remain too many people in prison for the limited accommodation and resourcing available to be able achieve the release of newly responsible citizens.

There is therefore a need to think creatively and whilst I have always accepted that Scotland should not build its way out of a problem, we could and should be building our way into safe communities. In a fiscally challenging environment, every opportunity to invest to save elsewhere must be actively considered.

The ambitious development of the HMP & YOI Stirling and the two women's Community Custody Units were a groundbreaking and commendable approach to women in custody; it would be good to see that creativity applied equally ambitiously to radical justice options that might lead to fewer people being sent to prison, less time having to be spent in prison, more effective use of any time spent there and robust release planning and support.

The opportunity for example of co-locating community justice centres incorporating prison, courts and a forensic unit could see a paradigm shift in some of the current pressing issues on mental health and prisoner transport but could also provide a centre of excellence in prisoner assessment of risk and custody planning. The development of the new HMP Glasgow offers that opportunity.

It would also be good to see the alignment of provision for every cohort; adult men over the age of 21 and women have the opportunity for considerably reduced restrictions in preparation for release. This is sadly lacking in both the young offender estate whose accommodation is solely in the very secure HMP YOI Polmont and with the elderly who require social care. Arguably, investment in young people to break the cycle of offending is critical to safer communities and the level of security required for those with age-related issues is not met with the current accommodation options.

The potential for the Scottish Prison Service to use their staff prisoner relationship expertise and third sector partnerships in delivering community options is an area that could also be explored. With the demise of the Throughcare Officers we missed an opportunity to expand their success into, for example, supported halfway houses allowing for earlier release and options for social enterprises spanning release. Harnessing the expertise and heft of the third sector, has proven validity in reducing recidivism in other jurisdictions and could offer similar benefits in Scotland.

Our four full inspections of prisons in this reporting year saw the pre-inspection prisoner survey not only providing an improved level of quantitative and qualitative information but also provided the opportunity to benchmark comparator establishments and look at the experience of different cohorts. Regrettably, despite many examples of good practice, for example, the growth of Recovery Cafés, use of community hubs, a drop in the use of segregation with young people and greater use of technology to support family contact, the entrenched problems I and my predecessors have identified over many years remain in every inspection.

The rise in remand, overcrowding, social isolation, an ageing estate, very limited access to purposeful and rehabilitative activity, the backlog in offending behaviour work, alcohol and substance issues, prisoner transport failures and inequitable access to good healthcare remain highly problematic across the estate.

I was genuinely concerned to see so many acutely mentally unwell people being held in custody. There is no doubt that prison and NHS staff were doing their best, but we noted they had to cope with profoundly distressed patients who were experiencing delays in transfer to in-patient care and people whose mental unwellness did not meet the threshold for inpatient care but nonetheless had disturbing and challenging behaviour.

Conversely, I must mention that I have been continually impressed by the many examples of innovative approaches to life in custody and the visible compassionate and thoughtful care that I have observed. The growth of the Recovery Cafés agenda for reducing the demand for substance misuse through to employment partnerships in hospitality and construction stands out; but it is the individual efforts of Governors and their teams that are to be commended, particularly given the enormous challenges they have and continue to face.

If prisons are to continue to be an essential component of a successful justice system that is trusted by the public to keep them safe, the ambition must also be to go further. Making sure that Governors, Directors, education providers and the NHS do everything within their power to enhance the likelihood of a crime free life and reduce the risk to the community on liberation can only be achieved with either a smaller prison population or an increased level of resource.


Few thoughtful commentators would deny that many of the problems we grapple with in the field of criminal justice have their roots and origins in social justice issues. A fresh view of the accommodation and resources for prison custody in Scotland is required.

To their credit, all these issues are being reviewed to determine the best use of resources within a fiscally challenging environment. As I have said before, a bold and brave transformational justice agenda could allow Scotland to reduce the prison population, affording the SPS the opportunity to deliver greater rehabilitative opportunities and lead the way again in enlightened justice and penology. With the added possibility of being able to close some of the ageing and expensive buildings.

I am hopeful that many of the issues we have raised can be addressed and resolved. Scotland has demonstrated the ability to achieve significant justice reforms in the past. We now need to see the same commitment and focus to drive further reform with innovative thinking that can deliver a justice system Scotland deserves but still within an appropriate funding envelope. However, while recognising the difficult fiscal challenges facing the Scottish Government, it would be a travesty to see any delay in the arrival of the much-needed HMPs Glasgow and Highland.

Governors, Directors, GEOAmev, SPS and NHS staff in all places have had a challenging year. I know I speak for all my colleagues in HMIPS in paying tribute to their professionalism, and desire to support those in their care in difficult times. This is even more remarkable when it is recognised that they are dealing daily with some people who are the most difficult, dangerous, and at times highly vulnerable in the country.

I am also constantly impressed by the commitment and expertise of my team who continue to work with such dedication and professionalism. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the work of HMIPS during 2023-24, with particular admiration of course for our wonderful team of volunteer IPMs, and those volunteers who provide an advisory function to the Prison Expert Group (PEG), all of our guest inspectors from our key partner agencies, and to the Scottish Government, the SPS and NHS for their continued support.



Scotland does not lack a positive vision, but where clarity is lacking is the strategy for reducing the prison population whilst also recognising the pressures of changing demographics. The development of a clear forward-looking policy approach to population management across the Justice estate is now essential to move Scotland forward and ultimately reduce the risk to the community. If current levels of resourcing and population remain static, containment rather than [The Vision for Justice in Scotland](#) will be the order of the day.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the people living in prisons and their families for engaging with us and giving us their welcome insights.

*Wendy Sinclair-Gieben*

**HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland,  
Chair, UK National Preventive Mechanism**



## 2. Our Vision, Our Values, Our Strategic Ambition



---

## Our Vision

**“All people in places of detention are treated humanely, with dignity and respect.”**

---

## Our Values

We will demonstrate these values in the way that we work together as an organisation and in all of our interactions with our partners.

### INDEPENDENCE



We will fulfil our statutory duty to report accurately, impartially and publicly concerning the treatment and conditions for prisoners in Scotland.

### INTEGRITY



We will be open and transparent about our inspection and monitoring processes, and ensure our inspection and monitoring reports are accessible when we report publicly on our findings.

### TRANSPARENCY



We will demonstrate the highest professional standards of behaviour and build trust with all those we engage with.

### RESPECT



We will treat all people we engage with, with dignity, courtesy and respect.

---

## Our Strategic Ambition

**“To be recognised globally as leading edge in the scrutiny of how people in detention in Scotland are treated.”**

## 3. Our Key Partners



Our prison inspection teams comprise HMIPS staff and subject experts from other organisations. HMIPS would like to take this opportunity to thank its key partners for their continued support. Our five key partners are:



#### Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)

HIS takes lead responsibility for inspecting Standard 9 – Health and Wellbeing. One of the biggest and often most challenging elements of prison inspections is the inspection of prisoner healthcare. Standard 9 was developed in conjunction with HIS and a range of their key stakeholders, and the Quality Indicators under the Standard reflect a human rights approach as well as the [Health and Social Care Standards: my support, my life - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Health-and-Social-Care-Standards-my-support-my-life), My Life Principles and HIS Quality of Care Approach.



#### Education Scotland

Education Scotland participate in all prison inspections and take lead responsibility for inspecting Standard 6 – Purposeful Activity. This Standard focuses on evaluating how well prisons provide employment, training, and educational activities for prisoners while they serve their sentences and is one of the key differentiators in reducing reoffending. Education Scotland also consider whether prisoners spend their time purposefully and constructively in out of cell activities, including physical education and cultural activities.



#### Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate take lead responsibility for Standard 7 – Transitions from Custody to Life in the Community. They look at what support is in place in the lead up to people being released, and importantly what support is in place once released, to assist people to reintegrate into the community and become responsible citizens.



#### Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC)

SHRC provide support and expert advice to HMIPS inspectors on human rights issues and may attend an inspection on an intelligence-led basis where appropriate. In addition, they chair the UK National Preventive Mechanism Scottish Subgroup.



#### Children & Young People's Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS)

The Children & Young People's Commissioner Scotland promotes and safeguards the human rights of children and young people under 18, or up to 21 if they have care experience. During prison inspections where establishments hold prisoners under the age of 18, the office of the Children & Young People's Commissioner are invited to review the prison against international human rights standards. Their findings are incorporated into the HMIPS final report.

# 4. The Year in Brief



## Summary of Work Undertaken



**1059**

IPM visits



**1202**

Prisoner requests  
actioned by IPMs



**4149**

IPM monitoring hours



**2**

court custody unit  
inspections



**4**

full prison  
inspections



**4**

evidence sessions attended  
at Scottish Parliament



**7**

FOIs

thematic reviews in  
collaboration with key  
stakeholders

**6**

public enquiries responses **2**

- The Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry
- The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry - Investigating the abuse of children in care in Scotland

Government Consultation Responses **3**

- A Human Rights Bill for Scotland
- the SPS budget
- the transgender policy

## The UK National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)

The UK National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) was established in 2009 following the United Kingdom ratification of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). HMIPS is one of 21 bodies that make up this consortium-based organisation, each contributing to fulfilling the OPCAT mandate. The NPM also connects national bodies to the international framework – offering international best practice advice to scrutiny bodies and liaising with the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT).

All inspections carried out by HMIPS contribute to the UK's fulfilment of its international obligations under OPCAT. HMIPS values collaboration with other NPM bodies to address systemic issues seen in places where people are deprived of their liberty across all four nations.

In 2023-24, HMCIPS was the Chair of the UK NPM and continued to lead an ambitious two-year strategy to embed the preventive approach to scrutiny, including developing training and resources for the 21 NPM bodies with circa 3,500 people carrying out the NPM mandate. In 2023-24, training resources suitable for leaders, staff and volunteers were drafted, which will be launched later in 2024.

HMIPS is also one of six NPM bodies that make up the NPM Scotland Subgroup, which meets to address Scotland-specific issues. In 2023-24, the group undertook several joint actions to support the prevention of torture and ill-treatment in Scottish detention settings, including organising a roundtable on the topic of deaths in custody, sending a statement of concern on the implementation of recommendations from the Independent Review of the Response to Deaths in Prison Custody, sending a letter of concern on human rights violations in the use of separation

and reintegration units (SRUs) in Scottish prisons, and making a joint submission to the Scottish Government's consultation on the draft A Human Rights Bill for Scotland. Through NPM work, HMIPS continues to have the opportunity to strongly advocate our view, with added support of the other NPM bodies.

HMIPS supports the NPM's rights-based approach to monitoring and inspection, and echoes the four NPM values:

### 1. Detainee-Focused

- The treatment and conditions of detainees will always be the core of our work.

### 2. Independence

- We are independent of government and external influence. We are impartial, balanced and without bias.

### 3. Human Rights

- We are a human rights organisation and human rights experts. Our parent treaty is the UN Convention against Torture, but we recognise human rights are interconnected and as such all human rights are relevant to our work.

### 4. Collaboration

- We work collaboratively with each other, sharing expertise and good practice.
- We work collaboratively with civil society and external partners to broaden our perspective and help fulfil our objectives.

## 5. Scrutiny





## Inspections

HMIPS inspected four prisons and three court custody units in this reporting year.

### Prison Inspections

#### HMP Greenock

The most striking feature of HMP Greenock was the excellent staff-prisoner relationships. Eighty-two percent of prisoners in our confidential pre-inspection survey said they were treated with respect by staff all or most of the time. No doubt this contributed to 84% of prisoners telling us they felt safe all or most of the time. We saw evidence of some heart-warming examples of staff going the extra mile for their prisoners in a caring and compassionate manner. Inspectors were also encouraged to see this caring approach fully demonstrated and robustly embedded in the prison's Talk To Me (TTM) suicide and self-harm prevention activities. Good relationships between the SPS and NHS teams undoubtedly helped in this regard.

There was a similarly proactive approach to Health and Safety within the prison and inspectors could see that significant efforts had been made to address the issue of dampness in the cells and physical deterioration to other parts of infrastructure that we had highlighted in our previous reports. It was good to see that as a result of these efforts the number of cells out of action through dampness had reduced considerably; it was however too soon to assess the long-term durability and effectiveness of the treatment and repainting work carried out. Nevertheless, we recorded continuing concerns on the fabric and condition of the buildings.

The two Community Integration Units were underused, and it was HMIPS's opinion that this was a missed opportunity for the SPS. The connectivity between the prison and external partners around case management was outstanding. A number of initiatives were at an

early stage but appeared geared up to deliver positive results. The creation of a hybrid prison/community-based social work post offered the opportunity for better links between teams and continuity of release planning. Similarly, the "Moving On" initiative will allow people to begin substance use and trauma recovery work in HMP Greenock prior to release, with follow-on support in the community facilitated by Inverclyde Council justice services.

One of the most encouraging outcomes of the inspection was the confidence that HIS had in the quality of the healthcare being delivered in HMP Greenock. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's prison healthcare team benefited from operating without any vacancies at the time of the inspection, which unfortunately is not something we see in many prison healthcare teams. Not surprisingly optimum staffing levels enhanced service delivery and supported patients to access services.

There was an insufficient number and range of work opportunities and there was scope to be more imaginative and achieve more with the limited workshop floor space available in the prison. Similarly, attendance levels in the Learning Centre were low and a more proactive approach to promoting the Learning Centre would be beneficial.

As we have seen in other establishments a more robust approach to promoting and safeguarding Equality and Diversity would be desirable, in particular a more proactive approach to the use of translation services to support foreign nationals with limited understanding of English.

While it was clear that violence levels were not excessive, and individual incidents of violence were being reviewed for learning and intelligence gathering, there was no formal violence reduction strategy and only limited awareness of the anti-bullying Think Twice strategy. There are, however, a number of more enduring challenges which we have raised before in other inspection reports; notably the continuing and unacceptable delays in

securing a First Grant of Temporary Release, which were a major frustration for prisoners in Chrisswell House as it restricted the value of being in a National Top End facility and was rightly perceived to be holding back their ability to progress further. Similarly, the lack of access to national accredited programmes within HMP Greenock that are essential to some people's progression plans is a further and understandable frustration for those held there.

In total, seven standards were assessed as satisfactory and two were assessed as generally acceptable. We identified 21 elements of good practice and made 68 recommendations for improvement. Of those 68 recommendations, we closed 23 at the six-month review following publication of the report. A further review will take place after 12 months. We encouraged a particular focus on seven key recommendations which in summary were:

- The SPS and the Scottish Government must confirm its commitment to a modern replacement for HMP Greenock, but also invest now to address the physical deterioration of the current buildings until a new prison comes on stream.
- HMP Greenock should prioritise the review of employability and vocational training offered to prisoners.
- HMP Greenock should ensure that the range of employment and vocational training opportunities offered should reflect better the interests and abilities of prisoners and their relevance to employment on liberation.
- HMP Greenock and Fife College should review the learning offer to respond to and reflect the needs and interests of the prisoner population.
- HMP Greenock staff should promote learning opportunities to prisoners more effectively and encourage their participation.

- The SPS should reduce the delays to First Grant of Temporary Release.
- The SPS should deliver national accredited programmes within HMP Greenock appropriate to their prisoner population.

### HMP Perth

With strong management and a committed staff group both in the SPS and NHS, this was a sound and encouraging inspection report.

Whilst the buildings were well maintained, the fabric of the older buildings reflected their age, and in some cases did not provide fit-for-purpose facilities. There were two areas where the age and design of the building raised deep concerns; the small cells in A and B Hall that housed two prisoners in cramped conditions, a concern initially raised in 2014 and again in 2018, when HMIPS last inspected the establishment. The Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) prescribes a minimum cell size (excluding sanitation) of 6m<sup>2</sup> of personal space for one person in a single cell and a minimum cell size of 8m<sup>2</sup> for a double cell with two people. These cell sizes exclude sanitary areas which must be provided in addition to the required space. This is the internationally recognised minimum standard to ensure that the conditions of detention themselves do not constitute a form of ill treatment. Shared cells on B Hall were well below the minimum standard of space. This is an urgent issue that must be addressed despite the rise in population.

The population complexity had changed since the last inspection and HMP Perth had an unusually high level of remand prisoners. Managing a regime for this population is challenging. The pre-inspection survey had some worrying results which did not wholly chime with the findings of the inspection, and this perception gap needs to be addressed by the prison. However, one concern stood out where management, staff and prisoners reported to inspectors their concerns and anxieties in relation to prisoner use of illicit substances.

The recent introduction of drone technology to deliver large quantities of contraband was a step change and clearly reversing the positive effect felt with the introduction of photocopying mail. We were particularly pleased to see the proactive approach taken by the Governor and Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to robustly address both the supply and demand elements of substance misuse.

Seen as good practice, HMP Perth has been a pilot site for implementing the Medication Assisted Treatment Standards to ensure safe, accessible, and high-quality treatment. The recovery hub was a welcome initiative and had a number of groups and resources that prisoners could access, delivered in partnership with agencies led by individuals with a lived experience of substance use. In addition, we were impressed by the data correlation between violence and those being managed or considered at risk of substance misuse, supported by the daily “Person of Concern” meetings that involved multi-stakeholders in managing vulnerable prisoners.

Again, equality and diversity was not often given the priority it deserved, and in HMP Perth was somewhat nuanced. There was an enthusiastic E&D Co-ordination Team, however, we noted that front line staff lack of knowledge of entitlements for foreign prisoners was compounded by the lack of information available in different languages.

We were encouraged by the two new employment initiatives, offering real life training, accreditation, and the possibility of employment on release and look forward to hearing updates on its success. We were interested to hear of the staff engagement initiatives, including a pilot where officers led groups of prisoners in evening activities. This was designed to increase interaction and was still in its infancy. The Librarian deserves mention as enthusiastic, knowledgeable and responded well to prisoner feedback. However, since the pandemic,

the library had remained closed. HMIPS would like to see access to the library re-established.

The family-centred approach to visits and positive working relationship with the Visitor Centre was also welcomed. The willingness to have those with lived experience of prisons work in the prison and support those with addictions was impressive. However, the lack of accredited programmes and scope to improve the capacity for bespoke interventions that would support a prisoner’s transition was of concern.

Seven standards were assessed as satisfactory and two as generally acceptable. We identified 23 examples of good practice and made 73 recommendations for improvement. We encouraged a focus on the following recommendations:

- SPS HQ should reconfigure the small double cells in B Hall so they can only be occupied by one person.
- HMP Perth should ensure the Think Twice Policy and the Talk to Me Strategy is adhered to.
- HMP Perth should prioritise implementation of their work allocation policies and procedures to ensure there is fair and transparent work party allocation.
- HMP Perth should identify ways in which they can expand provision and extend access to physical and health educational activities.
- Perth and Kinross HSCP must ensure that personalised care plans are in place for all patients on the mental health caseload.
- Perth and Kinross HSCP must ensure that standardised individual risk assessments are used and updated regularly for all patients on the mental health caseload.

- Perth and Kinross HSCP must ensure that all patients with a long-term condition have person-centred and outcome-focussed care plans in place, which have been agreed with the patient and documented accurately in Vision.

### **HMP YOI Polmont**

Prior to inspection, our team of Independent Prison Monitors (IPMs) reported that significant improvements had been achieved by the prison management team over the previous 12 months. The inspection reinforced the view that the prison was indeed moving strongly forward. The senior management team had clearly brought vision, purpose, energy and direction to the prison, with a united staffing team behind them who felt valued and supported.

In the inspection report, HMIPS took the opportunity to say that it would like to see expedited the removal to secure care of the very small number of children still held in HMP YOI Polmont.

HMP YOI Polmont was a calm, stable, forward-looking prison with some excellent resources available to the young people and women. The NHS Forth Valley Healthcare Team had made great progress in addressing the issues brought up in our previous report and are to be highly commended for moving from a “poor” rating to “satisfactory”.

The prison was strong at identifying those who had additional needs and ensuring support was provided for them. We identified examples of good practice across the prison, including a locally devised First Night Immediate Needs checklist and early referral to support services after core screening. Inspectors were impressed too by the care and compassion demonstrated by staff when we observed TTM case conferences in operation. We welcomed a peer-written induction booklet, and the effort that had been put into developing pictorial information booklets and display boards, to assist the understanding of foreign nationals and those with literacy and numeracy issues or neuro-divergent backgrounds.

The Inclusion Team deserve mention as performing a vital role in trying to ensure that no one was left behind or isolated, and their contribution was widely praised both by inspectors and the young men and women who had benefitted from their support. In addition, we welcomed the use of Restorative Justice to resolve tensions in the establishment. The inspection team saw a commendable record of success in reducing the number of young men needing to be held in the Separation and Reintegration Unit to a minimum. It is commendable that there were periods when it lay empty. Inspectors observed excellent work being done through Life Skills courses and with outside agencies and third sector providers such as CrossReach and Paws for Progress, including support for those potentially more isolated than others.

As with any inspection, however, we witnessed several issues that caused us concern. In particular that the right under the Mandela Rules to an hour’s exercise in the fresh air every day was clearly being breached. We recognise that the sheer number of designated enemies that the young men experience makes this process difficult with only two exercise yards. The SPS must address this by funding the construction of additional exercise areas with outdoor fixed equipment. Our other significant concern related to body searching and the continued use of routine body searching of women after a visit and in cell searches. The potential for re-traumatising those who may have been affected by previous abuse is high. We continue to strongly urge the SPS to use the available technology and move permanently away from routine body searching to intelligence-led searching only. We must also record disappointment at the lack of programmes for offence-protection young men.

Food came out poorly in our pre-inspection survey in both quality and quantity. Inspectors had concerns about portion size and presentation. We urged the Catering Manager to engage directly with the Food Focus Groups and to look at what else could be done to encourage the young men towards healthier eating.

Although the prison could boast some excellent facilities and activities, including the radio station and drama/dance/music studio, the booking system did not work well, leaving some options under-utilised. More could be done to ensure opportunities are maximised and the risk of isolation accordingly minimised.

A greater rotation of work opportunities between the various categories of young men and women would also assist. While considerable effort was devoted to supporting the needs of the more vulnerable in the establishment, we must also record that the Anti-Bullying Strategy needs reinvigorated to ensure victims are properly supported. Similarly, while witnessing some outstanding examples of compassionate care for those on TTM, we must express concern at the high number of staff who had fallen out of competency around both TTM training and Emergency Response.

We also got a mixed picture around progression. With early indication of programme needs and reinvigoration of the personal officer role leading to some young men and women being very clear on progression processes, while others expressed a lack of understanding of the pathway and criteria for progressing to the Open Estate.

While healthcare had improved dramatically, the NHS and SPS need to work with the court system and others to improve the flow of important patient information, and to ensure that late arrivals into the prison still receive a formal health screening assessment.

The overriding impression was of a caring, compassionate, dynamic management team and staff group, and a prison that was moving energetically forward and recovering after the pandemic with greater pace than we have seen elsewhere.

In total seven of our nine standards inspected were assessed as satisfactory with two standards rated as generally acceptable. We identified 34 examples of good practice and made 76 recommendations for improvement. We will review progress six and 12 months after publication of the report. We encouraged SPS HQ, the prison and NHS Forth Valley to focus on the following key recommendations:

- HMP YOI Polmont should ensure as a matter of urgency that there is a safe in every cell and that it is in good working order.
- HMP YOI Polmont should ensure that all young men/women have clothing that is suitable for use in inclement weather.
- HMP Polmont should identify a senior manager to lead a review of the Anti-Bullying Strategy and retain ongoing oversight of the applications of the strategy's processes.
- SPS HQ should cease all routine body searching of young men/women, focussing instead on intelligence-led body searching and use of other means of detection.
- HMP YOI Polmont should ensure that the rotation of work parties happens to provide prisoners with access to a variety of employment opportunities.
- HMP YOI Polmont should review the booking system to allow for maximum attendance at purposeful activity.
- HMP YOI Polmont should review the regime to ensure the statutory one-hour access to fresh air is provided for all young men daily. If additional exercise yards are required to ensure adequate opportunities for exercise is provided, while still separating enemies, then SPS HQ should fund their construction.

- The prison needs to ensure all staff core competencies are brought back up to an acceptable level.
- HMP YOI Polmont and NHS Forth Valley should continue to seek ways of improving communication from courts and external services, to make the patient assessment process more robust to ensure important patient background information is received in a timely and consistent manner.
- SPS and NHS Forth Valley must work together to ensure that there is a robust process in place to ensure that those prisoners arriving late at the prison receive a formal health screening assessment.

### HMP Edinburgh

HMP Edinburgh was a well-run, effective but very busy prison, with a solid performance by management and staff at all levels in managing one of the most complex mixes of prisoner population of any Scottish prison establishment.

HMP Edinburgh has faced significant challenges not only with the impact of COVID-19 but also with high staff vacancies and staff absences. Despite this, HMIPS were disappointed not to find HMP Edinburgh in better shape, with explicit concerns about activity, time out of cell and the need for tighter assurance on use of force. However, the prison did feel safe.

The main concern was the lack of a full regime for prisoners. In particular, the very limited evening regime with almost no activities taking place beyond a relatively small number of prisoners having access to visits and the gym. Prisoners were frustrated to be locked in their cells for most of the day with little opportunity for activities. The prison, in theory, could provide an excellent range of work and educational opportunities, including music and a radio station. However, too often staff from regime areas were pulled away to cover shortages in residential areas, and either work

opportunities were cancelled or moving prisoners from residential areas to purposeful activity proved difficult, with no formal route movement. Greater effort needs to be made to improve the activity levels and we strongly suggest that a rapid reprofiling or workforce capacity modelling exercise is undertaken that addresses the issues.

The prison appeared stuck in the unhappy position of not having enough staff available to run an adequate evening regime, and therefore trying to cram everything into the core day. This resulted in clashes between activities and entitlements, such as access to fresh air, leaving the majority of prisoners locked in their cells from 4.30pm onwards, exactly as they were during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was almost a defeatist attitude amongst staff about the prospects of ever being in a position to improve this situation. The arrival of a new Governor and Deputy Governor, however, provides an opportunity to shift that dynamic, address any issues with rostering and shift pattern that may be inhibiting progress, and re-energise and reinvigorate efforts to reintroduce a more productive regime.

There were a number of examples of good practice to report. These included an impressive peer mentor system for new admissions and a robust local induction process, although it was difficult for protection prisoners and foreign nationals who did not speak English to access this. It was encouraging to see that prisoners in the SRU received regular visits from a GP and a mental health nurse. We also commend the Physical Training Instructors (PTIs) on the relationships developed with partners in the community to arrange football-themed events that brought families together and gave prisoners the opportunity to spend time with their children.

HIS inspectors identified 15 examples of good practice, including a system for fast tracking patients onto Opium Substitution Therapy, the weekly "Person of Concern" meetings with SPS colleagues, the use of "Change Grow Live" caseworkers to support people on liberation, and

the weekly Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) clinics delivered by a psychiatrist and a learning disability nurse.

Although the prison felt safe, a number of safety-related issues worried the inspection team. As in the 2020 report, planned removals were still not always being properly recorded, and there was a shortfall in the number of staff whose Control and Restraint (C&R) training was up-to-date. Regular cell searching was not consistent with good practice and a lack of control was evident in relation to the movement of prisoners. Similarly, there was no evidence of an anti-bullying strategy being implemented, despite this being a recommendation from our 2020 inspection report.

Although we saw evidence of TTM case conferences being handled well, we have made a number of TTM related recommendations, including not resorting to Immediate Care Plan (ICP) protocols when staff were available to hold a case conference. Essential training in British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICSc), and Food Hygiene for those working as cleaners, in the serveries or kitchen were also well below where they should be.

Accommodation noticeably varied; while the newer accommodation in Ratho Hall was of a high standard, the remand hall of Glenesk was of much poorer quality. Many cells in Level 3 had missing toilet seats and ventilation was a problem in some cells due to blocked vents. Some small single cells in Glenesk were being used for two people, which did not meet internationally recognised standards on minimum space for multi-occupancy and in addition contained only one chair. Cleanliness in some parts of the prison was noticeably poor; with, for example, litter collecting next to some external corridors. Control around the ordering and storage of towels and clothing needed improved.

As we have seen in many establishments, prisoners had no confidence in the complaints system. We make a number of recommendations in relation to this, the most significant is that SPS HQ should look

to introduce an electronic system for registering a complaint and recording progress with responding to it, which would end prisoner concerns that complaints get lost, torn up or are not actioned. Two further areas that could contribute to prisoner satisfaction would be making it easier for families travelling from afar to book double visits and ensuring equitable access to the prison library. As with many of our inspection reports, we strongly urge timely access to programmes essential to rehabilitation, reinvigoration of the personal officer scheme and assurance that short-term prisoners who meet the criteria are considered for progression to HMP Castle Huntly.

Overall, three standards were assessed as satisfactory and six as generally acceptable. We identified 26 examples of good practice and 112 recommendations for improvement. The first update from the prison on progress with the recommendations is due in September 2024 and again six months following. We encouraged the SPS and HMP Edinburgh to focus on the following key recommendations:

- SPS and HMP Edinburgh should undertake a full reprofiling or workforce capacity modelling exercise that recognises the staffing and regime challenges facing HMP Edinburgh.
- The HMP Edinburgh Senior Management Team should ensure that improvement priorities are effectively communicated and discussed with staff, particularly with regard to opening up the regime.
- HMP Edinburgh should with immediate effect ensure that all planned use of force removals are recorded, all paperwork completed and subject to review as per SPS guidelines.
- HMP Edinburgh should implement a controlled system for mass movement of prisoners.
- HMP Edinburgh should ensure searching processes are in place for movement of prisoners around the establishment.

- HMP Edinburgh should implement a violence reduction strategy.
- HMP Edinburgh should ensure there is an anti-bullying strategy in place that meets the aims of the SPS anti-bullying policy.
- SPS HQ should withdraw the use of single cells as double cells for contingency plans in Glenesk, where they do not meet minimum space standards.
- HMP Edinburgh should address the levels of graffiti and poor cosmetic state of many cells in Glenesk and ensure doors and handrails in the stairwell are painted.
- HMP Edinburgh should ensure all cells have toilet seats.
- SPS HQ should introduce a complaints system that will evidence when a complaint has been made and is able to track the progress electronically, with the prisoner receiving a written acknowledgment that his complaint has been logged and is offered progress reports when requested.
- HMP Edinburgh should ensure all prisoners within each prison population have equitable access to participate in good quality employment opportunities.
- HMP Edinburgh need to address the issues around escorting prisoners to the Learning Centre to improve attendance levels.
- SPS HQ should ensure timely access to accredited programmes is available to enable evidence of change for progression.

- HMP Edinburgh should reinvigorate the personal officer scheme and improve awareness of their role in the Integrated Case Management (ICM) processes to achieving the desired outcomes.
- HMP Edinburgh should ensure that all core competency training increases to the required level as a priority.

## Court Custody Unit (CCU) Inspections

In previous years, court custody unit inspections experienced a wide disparity between units, ranging from cells that frequently contained significant graffiti, and in some cases a lack of privacy in using toilet facilities, to modern purpose built units that in contrast were clean and graffiti free.

This year, inspections were carried out at Kirkwall (25 July), Selkirk (18 May) and Alloa (12 April) CCUs and a review of previous recommendations for Glasgow CCU. There were no key findings from the inspections carried out, although inspectors were pleased to see that the vast majority of the recommendations made for Glasgow CCU had been addressed. This included one of the longest outstanding recommendations where the male toilets in Glasgow Sheriff Court have now been fitted with doors to provide a degree of privacy to the users.

During the next reporting year HMIPS intend to visit more of the outlying CCUs, including the Scottish islands. This will bring us closer to visiting all of Scotland's 48 CCUs during the current Chief Inspectors tenure.

However the care by individual staff working in CCUs continued to be impressive where, in a busy and often uninviting environment, they did their best to make sure custodies were treated with dignity and respect.



## Thematic Reviews

### Review Of Segregation In Scottish Prisons

We published a Thematic Review of Segregation in Scottish Prisons in July 2023. The review team visited all SRUs in Scotland, and interview prisoners and staff members who lived and worked there. The review raised serious concerns about the use of segregation, including overuse; extremely lengthy SRU stays; a lack of purposeful activity, meaningful human contact, mental health support and reintegration planning for segregated prisoners. Of particular concern was the relatively common practice of using SRUs as a place of safety for those with severe mental illnesses.

### Young People’s Experiences of the Scottish Prison System - Analytical Review

We published an Analytical Review of the Experiences of Young People in the Scottish Prison Estate in March 2024. This was based on data from the HMIPS pre-inspection survey and focus groups with young prisoners in YOIs and adult settings. It found notable differences in experiences between young people held in the YOI setting compared to those held in the adult estate, with young people in the YOI setting generally reporting stronger relationships with staff, and better access to purposeful activity, health care and family contact. Meanwhile, young people held in the adult estate reported more negative experiences across most measures than both young people in the YOI setting, and older adults. Given the known importance of giving young people in the justice system the right support to help them rehabilitate and reintegrate into the community, this report raised concerns about whether young adults in the Scottish prison system are receiving the level of support they need.

### Review of Prison-based Social Work

In April this year, we published a Thematic Review of Prison-based Social Work, jointly with the Care Inspectorate. This report concluded the first phase of work to review the service. It considered the direction of Scotland’s prison-based social work services within the context of the changing prison population, resource constraints, and competing demands. Recognising the critical contribution of social workers across the prison in assessing risk and preparing people to return to communities, it also highlighted that this important role is not as visible or well understood as it could be amongst local and national partners. It focussed on the impact of pressured resources on capacity and found that there was a lack of consistently robust performance management or quality assurance measures to drive improvement. At the strategic level, the report found there was no clear national vision concluding that “fundamental reform” is needed. Having considered the operating context, the next phase of the joint review will focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of prison-based social work practice.

### A Thematic Review of Prisoner Progression in Scottish Prisons

Published in June 2024, HMIPS Thematic Progression Review examined the effectiveness of the SPS Risk Management, Progression & Temporary Release policy and practice designed to prepare sentenced individuals for release and test their ability to manage their identified risks in readiness for access to the community. The review will focus on the performance of three core component parts of the SPS policy that govern the prisoner’s progression pathways through to release – Integrated Case Management, Risk Assessment and Risk Management Teams.

## Remand

We have initiated an analytical review of experiences of remand in Scottish prisons, which we aim to publish in early 2025. HMIPS has expressed concern over the consistent increase in numbers of remand prisoners over recent years, as well as the length of time people in Scotland spend on remand.

There is significant concern that people on remand spend long periods locked up in their cells with little to do, increasing their risk of isolation and poor mental and physical health. There are also concerns about over-crowding on remand halls, a shortage or lack of purposeful activity or rehabilitative work for remand prisoners, instances in which remand prisoners are not offered the amount of family contact to which they are entitled, and inadequate support for physical and health issues or addictions among the remand population.

This analytical review will therefore examine the conditions for and treatment of remand prisoners across the prison estate, and their experiences of life on remand. Using a mixed-methods approach, it will provide robust, systematic evidence on areas of concern and possibilities for improvements.

## Thematic Review of Prisoner Transport

Following our well-documented and well-communicated grave concerns about prisoner transport in late 2023, we began the fieldwork. Our concerns were shared by Audit Scotland, as evidenced by the publication of a Section 22 report by the Auditor General in December 2023. Our review will be informed by people and partner organisations in the criminal justice system affected by the provision. We are grateful to partners for the identification of single points of contact with whom we have collaborated in this work. Scheduled for publication in the Autumn of this year, the review will focus on the critical nature of this cross-cutting service and how failures have the potential to affect the human

rights of people in custody. From this perspective we will undertake examination of operational practice as well as the leadership and partnership arrangements that support and underpin the arrangements.

## Correspondence of note


### Routine Body Searching of Women in Prison

In this period, we have made repeated calls to bring to an end the routine body searching of people in prison custody in Scotland. Focussing on women and young people at this stage we have brought our desire to replace this outdated and potentially retraumatising practice with the technology that exists to do so as soon as possible to the attention of the SPS and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs through letters that we have subsequently published on our website. We were particularly taken aback to find this practice in place in the Community Custody Units for women as they take account of the lower risk profiles of the women resident there and operate on trauma-informed principals. Our concern does not relate to intelligence or suspicion led activity which helps keep people safe. However, I do believe that when this practice goes along with a routine activity such as a post-visit search it becomes unnecessary, invasive retraumatising and should cease.

## Urgent action required to reduce the prison population

On 12 September 2023 HMCIPS wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs with our deep concerns about the overcrowding in Scottish Prisons. In 2024, we see the crisis has deepened and in the context of economic, environmental, and political challenges I am forced to raise this issue again as a matter of urgency.

Overcrowding in Scottish prisons not only undermines the welfare and human rights of prisoners but also poses substantial risks to prison staff, public safety, and the overall criminal justice



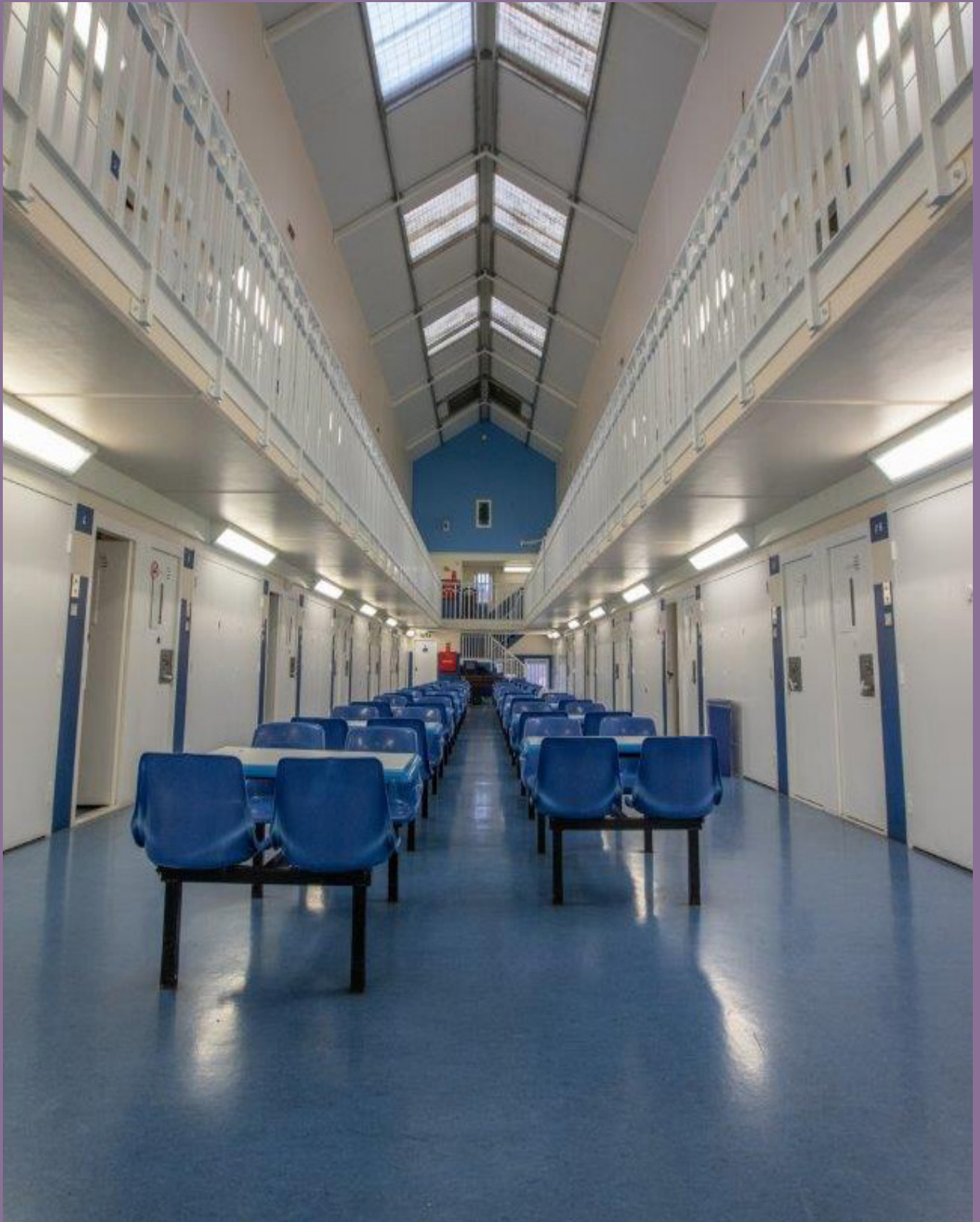
system. Inevitably, reduced access to essential services such as healthcare, mental health support, education, and rehabilitation programmes increases the likelihood of exacerbating existing issues, hindering the potential for successful reintegration into society upon release. Overcrowded prisons also often experience elevated levels of tension, violence, and conflict. The ability to manage these conflicts and identify those at risk strains prison staff and resources, compromising the safety of both prisoners and staff.

### **Prison Transport Provider**

The right to health and other health-related human rights are legally binding commitments enshrined in international and UK human rights instruments. Every human being has the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The fluctuating performance of GEOAmey and transport cancellations has been impacting on establishments operationally for some considerable time now. HMIPS have escalated concerns about this on a number of previous occasions:

From March 2020 in response to a number of critical non-court appointments (including healthcare appointments) being cancelled. As recently as February 2024 HMCIPS wrote to the Chief Executive of the SPS with concerns that enduring issues of cancellations for non-court appearances, and in particular critical healthcare appointments, remain deeply concerning.

## 6. Strategic Challenges for the Criminal Justice System



The criminal justice system in Scotland is facing a number of strategic issues that require a coordinated and holistic response. Many of these issues are long-standing and repeat observations have been made by me and previous HM Chief Inspectors over the life of the Inspectorate.

## Overcrowding

Overcrowding of Scottish prisons has been a key concern of HMIPS in consecutive reports for over a decade and continues to be so. In 2024, Scottish prisons are facing the very same problem that Charles Hill identified with overcrowding in 1979, but on an exacerbated scale. In May 2024 Scotland reached record levels of prisoners incarcerated, 8346, including over 700 with sentences of under 12 months.

Scotland already has one of the highest prison populations per head in Europe, and a prison infrastructure which cannot cope with the size and the complexity of the prison population and importantly has no surge capacity were there to be catastrophic failure in one of its large establishments.

The recent and predicted rise in the prison population is in contrast to assumptions that have been prevalent in recent years, with many policy and planning processes working on the basis that the population would decrease in volume and move the focus to community disposals.

The reason I and my predecessors have focussed strongly on overcrowding is that it affects every part of the criminal justice system, in particular the risk to the community. If individuals do not have their risks and needs addressed in prison, the rate of recidivism will remain high, and at significant cost to the public purse.

In the 2018-19 audit of the SPS, 1st Report, 2020 (Session 5) I made the statement that: “The choice is stark – either we put fewer people in prison, or we recognise that we have to pay for the prison population that we do have.” With the sustained increase in remand and backlogs in the court

system, the likelihood is clear of an adverse impact on the ability of the SPS to manage a decent, rehabilitative, and humane regime.

The statutory presumption against short-term sentences was approved by the Scottish Parliament through the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 because it recognised that short-term prison sentences can only have a disruptive effect on the life of individuals and not offer any rehabilitative function. The same applies for prolonged periods of remand, and yet we are seeing no clear diminution of the numbers in remand or the numbers in custody.

## Changing Demographics and Population Management

With the imperatives of a rising population, an ageing population, and challenging Serious Organised Crime Group (SOCG) cohort, decisive action is required. Meeting the complex social care and rehabilitative needs for both accommodation and care of the ageing population, as well as determining a clear strategy for SOCG, must go hand in hand with a wider justice strategy to reduce the population overall.

## Alcohol and Substance Misuse

Those countries that have successfully managed a sustained drop in their prison population and a reduction in drug-related deaths have almost uniformly taken the bold decision, as well as other strategies, to decriminalise or depenalise substance misuse. Unfortunately, these are often unpalatable concepts in our current climate. Recent academic evidence calls for a shift to a public health model and we applaud the rise in Recovery Cafés. However, the drug death statistics remain deeply concerning and clearly a new approach is required. Despite the best efforts of Governors, the current punitive approach enshrined in the Prison Rules is neither in step with current medical model thinking nor effective in preventing drug deaths.

## Health and Mental Health

Health remains a significant concern with NHS staff shortages increasingly perturbing. Recruitment and retention of clinical staff is challenging across Scotland and impacts heavily on prison care. Discussion on alternatives needs to take place between Health and Justice around the safe and appropriate location of prisoners with mental health issues.

HMIPS observe and interact with a high proportion of apparently mentally unwell prisoners, many of whom are located in segregation. We find prison used as a “place of safety” and lengthy periods of waiting for those who require in patient care. Women in particular are at the extreme end of the waiting times and if requiring high secure in-patient treatment are transferred to England.

## A Fragile and Ageing Prison Infrastructure

As has been repeatedly mentioned, the ageing infrastructure and general condition of some of Scotland’s prison buildings are ill suited to a modern prison system and the added complexity of an ageing population, not least at HMPs Barlinnie, Castle Huntly, Dumfries, Greenock, Inverness, and Perth. Some of Scotland’s prisons are modern and fit for purpose, but Scotland still has antiquated Victorian prison establishments that breach human rights guidelines on cell size, are expensive to maintain, and do not provide for the population size or changing demographics. Overcrowding has forced the use of cells designed for one but required to hold two. The CPT has long considered there should be 6m<sup>2</sup> of living space for a single occupancy cell and 4m<sup>2</sup> of living space per prisoner in multiple occupancy cells. Moreover, the number of cells out of commission and failing roof structures in HMP Greenock due to water ingress serve to highlight the challenges in maintaining Victorian infrastructures. The routine over-reliance on HMP Barlinnie for surge capacity when prisoner numbers are high accentuate the risks until the new HMP Glasgow is built and becomes operational.

## Prisoner Transport

Over my tenure there have been serious issues with fluctuations in the performance of the prisoner transport provider with unacceptable drops in performance that I have repeatedly raised with the Scottish Prison Service and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs. Since 2019, failure to meet the requirements of the prisoner transport contract has seen worrying cancellations of hospital appointments, inter-prison transfers, and other contractual requirements. Despite being reassured that actions were being taken by the SPS and GEOAmey to rectify the shortfalls; this remains a key concern and arguably a breach of human rights with regard to health. I am pleased to note that there has been a recent reduction in the number of critical hospital appointment cancellations, and other indicators of an uplift in performance, but we are a long way from seeing sustained improvement to an acceptable standard.

## Progression

Protecting the public cannot be achieved by any one agency. As such, community justice partners are expected to form strong partnerships at each point of the justice system. The SPS therefore work in partnership with national and local agencies to fulfil their core responsibilities. The delivery of a progression system is an important element of this joint approach to making communities safer.

Throughout the year, sentence progression was a major concern for the convicted prison population. An ineffective progression system may result in people serving their sentences in more restrictive regimes than necessary and lead to underuse of the Open Estate at HMP Castle Huntly and the Community Integration Units. Failure or delay in facilitating access to opportunities for prisoners to begin being tested in preparation for successful community reintegration, may also affect the overall number of people in custody when we face an increasingly overcrowded prison system in Scotland.



## Staffing shortages

The SPS, the prison transport provider and the NHS have experienced significant issues recruiting and retaining sufficient staff to run a rehabilitative and purposeful regime with access to health delivered under equivalent to the community. For GEOAmey, the prison transport provider, the impact has been particularly serious, contributing to significant failures against the contract. This has resulted in prisons having to provide staff for urgent appointments, sometimes affecting essential regime activity, through to late arrivals to the prison causing clinical concern. For the SPS and their private sector partners preserving the crucial balance of experienced staff and new recruits has at times caused serious concern, and for the NHS the pressure on the clinical staff remains acute.

# 7. Monitoring





We have a volunteer Independent Prison Monitor (IPM) Team who visit every prison in Scotland. With over 120 volunteers HMIPS is fortunate to have so many people willing to give their time and commitment. This vital scrutiny helps us fulfil our OPCAT and domestic requirements, but importantly provides an HMIPS presence in establishments on a regular basis, helping to prevent torture and ill treatment. This arm of the organisation also provides intelligence for our inspecting work and informs our strategic thinking.

The IPMs' top three concerns centred on the failings of the prison transport provider GEOAmev, the management of clearly mentally unwell prisoners, and prisoner progression. However, they also generated significant concerns on access to healthcare, in particular mental health, and staffing levels impacting on an impoverished daily regime. For each establishment, IPM annual reports are available on our website.

The Scottish Government's Volunteering Outcomes Framework aims to reduce barriers to volunteering for people from all sections of the community, regardless of their background. It promotes the value of volunteering and celebrates the contributions that have already been made and encourages everyone who wants to volunteer to take part.

The retention of volunteers is paramount to HMIPS and by listening to IPMs' volunteering experience, a replacement IT Case Management System was deemed essential to have a positive impact on their monitoring activities.

The previous IT system was deemed no longer fit for purpose following changes that had evolved since the inspectorate was first established under legislation in August 2015. This had a detrimental effect on the quality of information being recorded, hindered analytical work and jeopardised the evidence required by the Inspectorate to meet its legislative requirements.

In response to this, HMIPS secured investment to fund the development of a new Case Management System (CMS) which was phased over two financial years and was finally delivered for use in March 2024.

The new HMIPS CMS system:

- improves the quality and consistency of information logged into the system.
- increases the ability to co-ordinate monitoring visits through an online rota system allowing volunteers to self-populate.
- strengthens reporting mechanisms for weekly/monthly/annual performance figures.
- assists management with the evidence of compliance of legislative requirements.
- has the ability to accurately document and evidence prisoner issues that are required to be acted upon by HMIPS and record the outcomes.
- directs monitoring activities against each of the nine inspection and monitoring standards.
- gives volunteers full editing access to the system from their own home devices so that they can prepare better ahead of visits and if necessary complete the recording of visits at home, making more effective use of their time in the prison.

### **Independent Prison Monitoring Advisory Group (IPMAG)**

The Independent Prison Monitoring Advisory Group (IPMAG) plays a crucial role within HMIPS. Comprised of independent experts, IPMs, and HMIPS staff, and independently chaired, the IPMAG provides valuable oversight and advice to HMIPS regarding the monitoring of prisons in Scotland.

By collaborating with HMIPS, the IPMAG enhances the transparency and effectiveness of prison monitoring processes. Their input helps to ensure that monitoring is comprehensive, fair, and focused on promoting the wellbeing, safety, and rights of individuals in custody. Through their valuable contributions and recommendations, the IPMAG strengthens the accountability and quality of Scotland's prison system, contributing to ongoing efforts to improve conditions and promote a rehabilitative approach to incarceration.

The current volunteer IPMAG members are:

- Kathrine Mackie (Chair), retired Sheriff and Advisor to the Community Justice Scotland Board
- Jim Murdoch, Academic, Glasgow University
- Jim Farish, Scottish Human Rights Commission, and former SPS Prison Governor
- Jim Watson, Academic and member of the Prison Expert Group
- Gil Long, IPM at HMP Barlinnie
- Sarah Cox, IPM at HMP Perth, and the Bella Centre Community Custody Unit
- Tina Harris, IPM at HMP YOI Grampian, and HMP Inverness
- Margaret Roberts, IPM at HMPs Kilmarnock and Greenock
- Mark Hamid, IPM at HMP Edinburgh

In addition, HMCIPS is a member of the IPMAG, along with the Deputy Chief Inspector, and the four HMIPS Prison Monitoring Co-ordinators. A representative from the Scottish Government's Justice Directorate attends as an observer.

During this reporting year, the IPMAG met quarterly in May, September and November 2023, and February 2024. Discussions focussed primarily on the key purposes of the group as set out in the Public Services Reform (Inspection and Monitoring of Prisons) (Scotland) Order 2015, namely:

- the effectiveness of the independent prison monitoring system.
- the recruitment, retention and training of IPMs.
- annual review and further refinement of the Guidance for IPMs.
- recommendations for improvements in respect of the above.

In addition, the group monitored the ongoing development and ultimately the launch of a new IT system for IPMs to use in support of their weekly visits. Key areas of note discussed at the IPMAG were on-going prisoner transport failures, the effects of overcrowding due to the rising prison population, progression, access to healthcare, and the staffing levels of SPS and NHS services.

## 8. HMIPS Priorities for 2024-25



The issues identified earlier in this report clearly articulate where we must focus our activity in 2024-25. Sadly, many of them are unchanged from previous years and do not reflect the huge amount of work the small HMIPS team have achieved over the year:

- Maintaining continuing scrutiny via our prison and CCU inspections, thematic reviews and independent prison monitoring teams on the key strategic and operational issues highlighted earlier in this report, in particular on the following:
  - the impact of overcrowding - with prisons routinely having to operate with more prisoners than design capacity, compounded by staffing shortages, a high remand population, aged care, and an increased complexity in the population.
  - staffing shortages and inexperience in the SPS, prison transport provider and NHS impacting on the treatment and conditions of prisoners, particularly where they have the potential to breach human rights.
  - monitoring progress to resolve the levers to reduce overcrowding that the SPS have under their control; HDC and progression.
  - health and wellbeing particularly for those with mental health needs, alcohol and substance misuse, age-related issues, and secondary care.

In addition, we will be:

- monitoring progress with the replacement prisons, HMPs Glasgow and Highland; replacing HMPs Barlinnie and Inverness, whose fabric and condition are no longer fit for purpose.
- monitoring the progress in ensuring cells designed for one person but holding two are returned to single cells.
- maintaining an interest in the growth of the Recovery Cafés and the public health approach to alcohol and substance misuse.
- monitoring the progress with the key recommendations from our inspections and thematic reviews.
- supporting the NPM with their joint work on key detention issues, including the development of a training package for the prevention of torture and a mental health review across all four UK jurisdictions.
- completing a review of prisoner transport and the remand experience of prison custody in 2024.
- initiating a review of Use of Force following the Use of Force Review completed by the SPS.

# 9. Staff and Finances



## Staff

Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

Stephen Sandham, Deputy Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

Calum McCarthy, Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

Tom McMurchie, Thematic Lead Inspector, until February 2024

Jacqui Clinton, Thematic Inspector, from September 2023

Sam Gluckstein, Scottish NPM Co-ordinator and Human Rights Lead until September 2023

Chelsea Keenan, Scottish NPM Co-ordinator and Human Rights Lead from September 2023

Liz Ravalde, Senior Social Researcher

Christopher Johnston, Prison Monitoring Co-ordinator, Region 1

Vicky Dunlop, Prison Monitoring Co-ordinator, Region 2

Chris Collins, Prison Monitoring Co-ordinator, Region 3

Ewan Mackenzie, Prison Monitoring Co-ordinator, Region 4

Kerry Love, Business Manager

Graeme Neill, Operations Manager

Dorothy Halliday, Executive Assistant for HMCIPS

Alexandra Costello, Prison Monitoring Support Officer until August 2023

Vilmante Kirvelaite, Prison Monitoring Support Officer from December 2023

Shea Murray, Administrative Assistant

## Finances

Costs for the year were as follows

	(£)
Staff Costs*	1,010,140
Travel and Subsistence Costs	64,821
Printing and Binding	12,989.83
Conference Fees	10,282.36
Staff training	1,453.50
External consultancy	4,680
Other running costs	354,879.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,459,245</b>

\* Other running costs includes £343,876 for a new case management system for monitoring prisons

# 10. Annexes



## Annex A

### Independent Prison Monitoring Regions and Annual Reports

#### Region 1 ●

1. HMP Glenochil
2. HMP & YOI Grampian
3. HMP Inverness
4. HMP Open Estate
5. HMP Perth

#### Region 2 ●

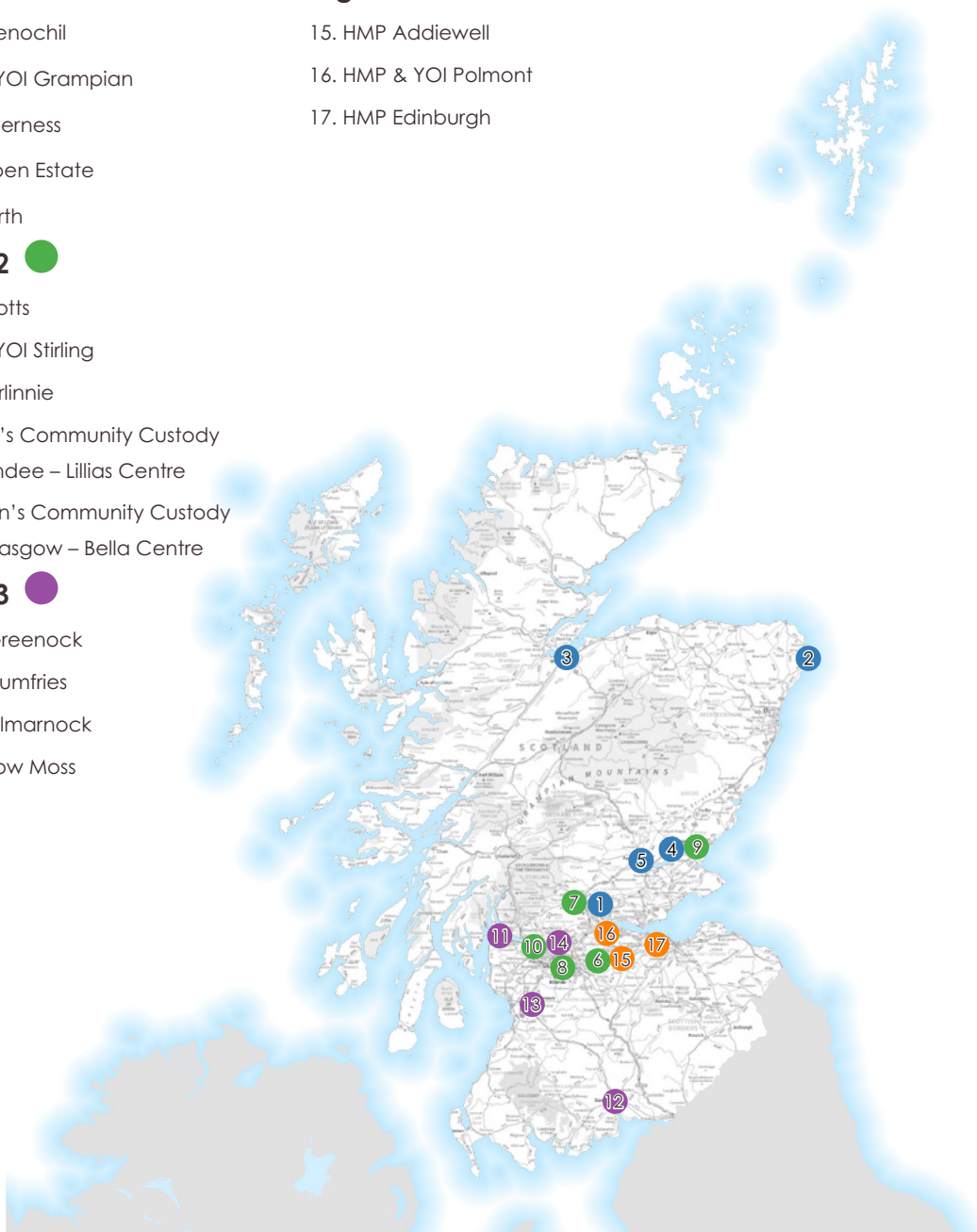
6. HMP Shotts
7. HMP & YOI Stirling
8. HMP Barlinnie
9. Women's Community Custody  
Unit Dundee – Lillias Centre
10. Women's Community Custody  
Unit Glasgow – Bella Centre

#### Region 3 ●

11. HMP Greenock
12. HMP Dumfries
13. HMP Kilmarnock
14. HMP Low Moss

#### Region 4 ●

15. HMP Addiewell
16. HMP & YOI Polmont
17. HMP Edinburgh



## Scotland's Prisons - 2023

with monitoring and inspection regions

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved Scottish Government 2022. © Crown copyright and database right 2022. Ordnance Survey (OS Licence number 100024655).

Scale 1:3,101,600

Scottish Government Geographic Information Science & Analysis Team. September 2022. Job6287s.





**HMP ADDIEWELL**

9 Station Road  
Addiewell  
West Lothian  
EH55 8QF

---



**HMP BARLINNIE**

81 Lee Avenue  
Riddrie  
G33 2QX

---



**BELLA CENTRE**

81 Ann Street  
Dundee  
DD3 7TF

---



**HMP CASTLE HUNTLY OPEN ESTATE**

Longforgan  
near Dundee  
DD2 5HL

---



**HMP DUMFRIES**

Terregles Street  
Dumfries  
DG2 9AX

---



**HMP EDINBURGH**

3 Stenhouse Road  
Edinburgh  
EH11 3LN

---



**HMP GLENOCHIL**

King O'Muir Road  
Tuilibody  
Clackmannanshire  
FK10 3AD

---



**HMP & YOI GRAMPIAN**

South Road  
Peterhead  
AB42 2YY

---



**HMP GREENOCK**

Old Inverkip Road  
Greenock  
PA16 9AJ

---



**HMP INVERNESS**

Duffy Drive  
Inverness  
IV2 3HH

---



**HMP KILMARNOCK**

Mauchline Road  
Kilmarnock  
KA1 5AA

---



**LILIAS CENTRE**

41 Shawpark Street  
Maryhill  
Glasgow  
G20 9DR

---



**HMP LOW MOSS**

Crosshill  
Bishopbriggs  
Glasgow  
G64 2PZ

---



**HMP PERTH**

3 Edinburgh Road  
Perth  
PH2 8AT

---



**HMP YOI POLMONT**

Brightons  
Falkirk  
FK2 0AB

---



**HMP SHOTT'S**

Canthill  
Shotts  
ML7 4LE

---



**HMP & YOI STIRLING**

Stirling  
FK9 5NU

---



## Annex B

### 2024-25 Planned Scrutiny

On present plans the following scrutiny has/will take place during 2024-25:

#### Full Prison Inspections:

HMP YOI Grampian – June 2024

HMP Dumfries – August 2024

HMP Barlinnie – November 2024

HMP Glenochil – February 2025

We may also undertake unannounced and announced follow-up inspections.

We will increase our scrutiny of Court Custody Units and a plan will be produced within the next few months.

#### Thematic Reviews

Thematic reviews that have been initiated and anticipate publication in 2024-25:

Transport Review

Remand Review



HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland is a member of the UK's National Preventive Mechanism, a group of organisations which independently monitor all places of detention to meet the requirements of international human rights law.

© Crown copyright 2024

You may re-use this information (excluding logos and images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

First published by HMIPS, August 2024  
ISBN: 978-1-83601-437-9

Produced for HMIPS by APS Group Scotland

Published by HMIPS, August 2024