

HM CHIEF INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



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HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland

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1. INTRODUCTION



Wendy Sinclair-Gieben
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

Foreword by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

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 by a lengthy pandemic. Without scrutiny, it is all too easy for even well-intentioned staff to acquiesce in setting standards that in any other setting would be unacceptable.

HMIPS monitoring and inspection scrutiny provides the breadth and depth to shine a light on the treatment and conditions of people deprived of their liberty, ensuring that decision-making processes are clear and accessible to the public and that decision-makers are held accountable for their decisions. Importantly scrutiny should also provide praise where that is due.

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms to which everyone in the UK is entitled. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law. The Act sets out the human rights in a series of 'Articles'. Each Article deals with a different right. Article 2, right to life; Article 3, freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment; and

Article 8, respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence.

The tension between Articles 2, 3 and 8 in the pandemic was fundamentally the difficulty of ensuring that transmission of the virus was minimised (Article 2) against the definition of ill treatment (Article 3), and the need to respect family life (Article 8).

The COVID-19 transmission challenges faced in the community were compounded in the secure estate, where the risk of infection was higher in a contained environment where large numbers of people lived and worked in close proximity. The Scottish Prison Service (SPS), NHS and the Scottish Government should be commended for their initial swift action in responding to the pandemic despite, at times, having large numbers of staff absent because of the virus.

The predictions by numerous academic and third sector groups of catastrophic outcomes for contained environments thankfully did not come to pass in Scotland's prisons and, despite numerous COVID-19 outbreaks, the number of COVID-19 deaths were very low. This significant achievement by caring prison and health service teams went largely unheralded in the media but deserves greater recognition.

The tension between COVID-19 and the official measures taken to combat its spread also presented a challenge to our usual scrutiny methodology. In response, HMIPS developed an adapted methodology to repurpose the scrutiny role and concentrate on the SPS response to the pandemic, to provide evidence to assess whether protective measures were resulting in inhuman or degrading treatment.

In the early stages of the pandemic, we chose to reduce our routine physical presence at custodial facilities and developed a 'stay safe and do no harm' approach by restricting inspections to one- or two-day Liaison Visits (LVs) and ensuring weekly monitoring visits could be undertaken remotely. We chose to complete LVs to all 15 prisons and all 17 operating court custody units during the pandemic, and developed a comprehensive risk assessment to focus our inspections.

Against this backdrop, the SPS and healthcare teams provided my inspection teams with excellent briefings in line with HMIPS' Reporting Standards, highlighting the challenges but also the successes they had achieved.

We were able to return to on-site monitoring surprisingly rapidly with a number of willing volunteers, but in the interim the development of remote monitoring gave a rich picture. The cooperation of the SPS and NHS in facilitating remote telephone or video calls, to management, staff and prisoners during this period was very much appreciated.

Some positive aspects of this more flexible approach will extend into the future. We will continue our practice of increased risk assessments prior to attending a facility and allow for concerned volunteers to undertake remote monitoring when necessary.

Our measured approach has been instrumental in allowing us to identify any emerging problems and we continued to work closely with all our stakeholders to find the right balance between safety and oversight.

One cannot emphasise enough the challenges faced by staff working in closed environments during a pandemic and the ever-present risk of catastrophic outcomes in terms of deaths and instability. These risks remain, of course, but I wholeheartedly commend the commitment, determination and courage of all the staff who continued working throughout this period and indeed the cohesive leadership that emerged during the crisis.

We also commend the tolerance and resilience of prisoners forced into extremely restricted conditions. Undoubtedly this has been supported by good staff prisoner relationships and the introduction of in-cell telephony and virtual visits. It is important that in-cell technology and video calling facilities remain after restrictions are lifted.

However, as my predecessors and I have observed before, the entrenched problems the Inspectorate has identified over recent years did not disappear; indeed some issues intensified. Overcrowding, social isolation, an ageing estate, access to purposeful and rehabilitative activity, the backlog in offending behaviour work and access to consistent health remain highly problematic.

Overcrowding

Overcrowding is a significant and enduring issue, compounded by a rising prison population that is well above the optimum single cell capacity necessary for

reducing virus transmission risk and ensuring decency and human rights compliance. The 2008 Scottish Prisons Commission Report set out an ambitious vision of penal reform, including a significant reduction in the prison population to an aspirational figure of 5,000 which has never been achieved. The 2017 and 2020 reports published by HMIPS made reference to the growing number of older prisoners in custody. In 2020, the number of older prisoners in Scotland's prisons had increased by 46%. This stark increase showed that the demographics were changing and some decisive action was required to meet the complex social care and rehabilitative needs of this ageing population. The population pressure on the prison system as a whole, inhibits access to the too-limited accessible cellular accommodation.

Social isolation

The introduction of in-cell telephony and virtual visits transformed the communication possibilities for prisoners and were very much welcomed. However, whilst I absolutely accept the untenable position that establishments were experiencing in managing the fallout from the pandemic, the measures imposed still placed a significant challenge to human rights compliance and rehabilitative activity, with far too many prisoners locked in a cell for 22 hours a day, effectively constituting solitary confinement. Interestingly the Inspectorate found that for a minority of prisoners, COVID-19 initially appeared to provide some relief from some of the negative aspects of prison life. We found insufficient data to realistically assess the access to purposeful activity and time out of cell, and urge the SPS in the future to routinely gather and publish this data.

One of my repeated findings is the cultural acceptance of a hierarchy of entitlement in prisons, where in Scotland remand prisoners are rarely afforded access to rehabilitative activity. For them 22 hours a day locked up in a room, often designed for one but holding two, is routine. The link between remand, social isolation and self-harm for young people is particularly disturbing, and the approach to infection control did not appear to take sufficient cognizance of the issues facing this vulnerable population. For the vast majority during the lockdowns, prison as a vehicle for rehabilitation simply did not happen. Continuing extreme restrictions for any cohort cannot be the answer in a post-or normative COVID-19 world.

Ageing estate

The ageing infrastructure and general condition of some of Scotland's prison buildings are clearly ill-suited to a modern prison system, not least at HMP Barlinnie, Castle Huntly, Dumfries, Greenock, Inverness and Perth.

We welcome the very significant investment that has been made over the last decade in the infrastructure of Scotland's prisons. Many of Scotland's prisons are modern and fit-for-purpose, but Scotland still has some antiquated Victorian prison establishments that are breaching human rights guidelines on cell size, are expensive to maintain, do not provide for the changing demographics of an ageing population, and have limited surge capacity. We welcome the planning for the replacement of HMPs Barlinnie, Inverness and the restructured women's estate, but the concerns about a rising prisoner population and overcrowding simply reinforce the need to ensure appropriate investment in vital new prison infrastructure, and adequate maintenance of ageing establishments until they can be replaced or the population reduces sufficiently to render it unnecessary.

HMIPS are firmly of the view that an estate optimisation plan should be developed for each of these sites, articulating short, medium and long-term objectives to improve living conditions for prisoners and working conditions for prison staff.

Purposeful and rehabilitative activity

Detention offers a unique opportunity to overcome social, criminogenic and community barriers to living a crime-free life. One of the national themes that has arisen from prison monitoring is the inequity in regimes for different groups of prisoners, including remand prisoners. Current overall provision simply does not cater for identified criminogenic need, population density, recovery need, Scotland's skill shortages and key life skills, and deserves urgent review.

Progression has been, and continues to be, an issue raised regularly and plaintively by Independent Prison Monitors (IPMs) and prisoners alike. The national COVID-19 restrictions have exacerbated what was already a challenging situation with considerable backlogs and waiting lists. There is no doubt that rehabilitation should be one of the main purposes of prisons, yet too many prisoners were locked up with too little to do before the pandemic and the

situation was then exacerbated by the response to the pandemic. Many prisoners have been denied the opportunity to get onto programmes that were part of their sentence plan and have therefore been unable to progress to a lower category prison or to a successful parole hearing.

The lack of access to offender management programmes, education, resettlement planning and family visits means that in the last year, many prisoners have been released without some of the core building blocks that would help them lead successful, crime-free lives.

Health

LVs concentrated during the year on access to care, infection control and governance leadership and staffing. The enduring issues of a lack of electronic prescribing, and recruitment and retention of clinical staff remained. Inspectors experienced a high proportion of apparently mentally unwell prisoners, many of whom were located in Separation and Reintegration Units (SRUs). We found prisons 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 they require high secure in-patient treatment are transferred to England. Health and Mental Health discussions on alternatives needs to take place around the location of prisoners with mental health or coping issues. The variation between health boards generated concerns and two clear issues emerged from the LVs and were escalated; late arrivals from court requiring staff to work onerous hours and the fabric and condition of healthcare facilities, particularly in HMP Barlinnie and HMP Greenock.

National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)

The publication in 2019 of the [European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#) (CPT) visit to Scotland, emphasised some key points of concern for prisons, and in particular the plight of women with significant mental health needs held in isolation at HMP YOI Cornton Vale. The Scottish Sub-Group of the [National Preventive Mechanism](#) (NPM) commissioned a further report to examine the progress made in places of detention in Scotland to rectify the issues identified by the CPT in their 2018 and 2019 reports.

Court Custody Units (CCUs)

A visit took place to all 17 CCUs that were operational in the first months of the pandemic in Scotland. The logistics required from the pandemic impacted heavily on the CCUs despite the reduced court activity. Adapted protocols for cell sharing, movement of custodies, and infection control suddenly became pressing matters with the added burden of physical distancing requirements, isolation for affected staff, and the considerable additional resources necessary to reduce virus transmission risks.

Within this challenging context, one element in particular stood out. Information sharing and scheduling between key agencies appeared to inhibit efficient CCU management. We would like to see an effective shared digital platform developed to assist in this issue. Despite these challenges, HMIPS found that the escort service functioned well. It also found that conditions in the majority of court cell areas were adequate, although a minority of courts face an urgent requirement to upgrade facilities.

Moving forward

As the pandemic begins to recede and the vaccine roll-out continues, there are opportunities for the SPS and NHS to reflect on some of last year's experiences. The extended, and in other ways highly damaging, periods of lock-up have contributed to higher perceptions of safety. There is now the opportunity to learn from this last year and allow prisoners out of their cells to access rehabilitative activities, purposeful education, training and work whilst maintaining the perception and reality of safety.

Since I started as Chief Inspector, I have been constantly impressed by the commitment and expertise of my colleagues at the Inspectorate and the inspection partners who have continued to visit establishments throughout the pandemic. I want to thank all my staff, whether inspectors, IPMs, researchers or in Business Support, for continuing to maintain this organisation's reputation for independence, impartiality and professionalism.

Governors, Directors, GEOAmey and NHS staff in all places have also had the most challenging year imaginable. I know I speak for all my colleagues at the Inspectorate in paying tribute to their commitment, dedication and hard work.

Going forward, I would like to strongly urge the Scottish Government that alternatives to remand or custodial sentences, currently being explored, are expedited and the context of a presumption of liberty exploited for young people. The SPS' efforts to maintain safety, encourage rehabilitation and reduce recidivism must not be compromised by a prison population again escalating beyond design capacity on the resumption of court activity.

My earlier statement made to the Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee in 2019 still stands. '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.' A reduced prison population would undoubtedly assist with providing a modern rehabilitative experience for those who do have to be there. Similarly, I welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to ensuring that children under age 18 will in future be looked after in secure care settings rather than in a young offenders institution.

A bold and brave transformational agenda, including removing children from prison, supporting recovery as a forerunner to liberty, and a full review of the out-of-date Prison Rules could allow Scotland to lead the way again in enlightened justice and penology.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the work of HMIPS during 2020-21, with a particular thanks to our volunteer IPMs, all our Guest Inspectors from our key partner agencies who assisted us on our inspections, and of course to the SPS, Sodexo, Serco and the NHS for their continued support and transparency.

Wendy Sinclair-Gieben

Wendy Sinclair-Gieben

**Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prison for Scotland
November 2021**

OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of HMIPS is to inspect and monitor the treatment and conditions for prisoners in Scotland, in prisons, CCUs and GeoAmey court custody vehicles, and to report publicly on our findings. HMIPS is independent of the SPS, the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service (SCTS) and the Scottish Government, allowing us to report our findings impartially.

HMIPS inspect and monitor prisons against a set of predefined Standards for Inspecting and Monitoring Prisons in Scotland, developed in conjunction with the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC), and first published in March 2015, with a further refinement in May 2018 to ensure that they continue to express, as clearly as possible, our expectations under each of the Standards.

The [Standards](#) for court custody inspections were derived from the [Standards for Inspecting and Monitoring Prisons in Scotland](#), but are specifically for use in Scotland's court buildings. These Standards were refined and published in January 2020. Standards for Inspecting Court Custody Provision in Scotland are also in place. Both sets of Standards were developed in consultation with GEOAmey, the SCTS and the Scottish Court Custody and Prisoner Escort Service (SCCPES).

The information that we gather from both inspections and monitoring visits allows us to obtain both a breadth and depth of perspective. Every effort is made to ensure that our assessments are evidence-based, fair, balanced and accurate before reporting.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The lived experience of those in custody lies at the heart of our inspection and monitoring process and our Standards place the human rights approach explicitly at the core of all monitoring and inspecting activities.

SCRUTINY

Our programme of regular scrutiny is informed by an assessment of risk and requirement. We undertake return visits where areas of concern are raised, supplemented by our routine ongoing monitoring of prisons by IPMs.

MONITORING

IPMs are volunteers from local communities who monitor treatment and conditions in Scotland's prisons. Each prison is monitored at least once per week. IPMs make observations about treatment and conditions and can look into issues prisoners raise. Any prisoner can ask to see an IPM by either approaching IPMs while they are visiting prisons or telephoning the IPM Freephone on 0800 056 7476. Calls are confidential and free.

THE NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM (NPM)

The UK is a signatory to the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). HMIPS is one of 21 bodies that comprise the UKs' NPM, which has a duty to regularly monitor the treatment of detainees and the conditions in which they are held.

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](#) 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)

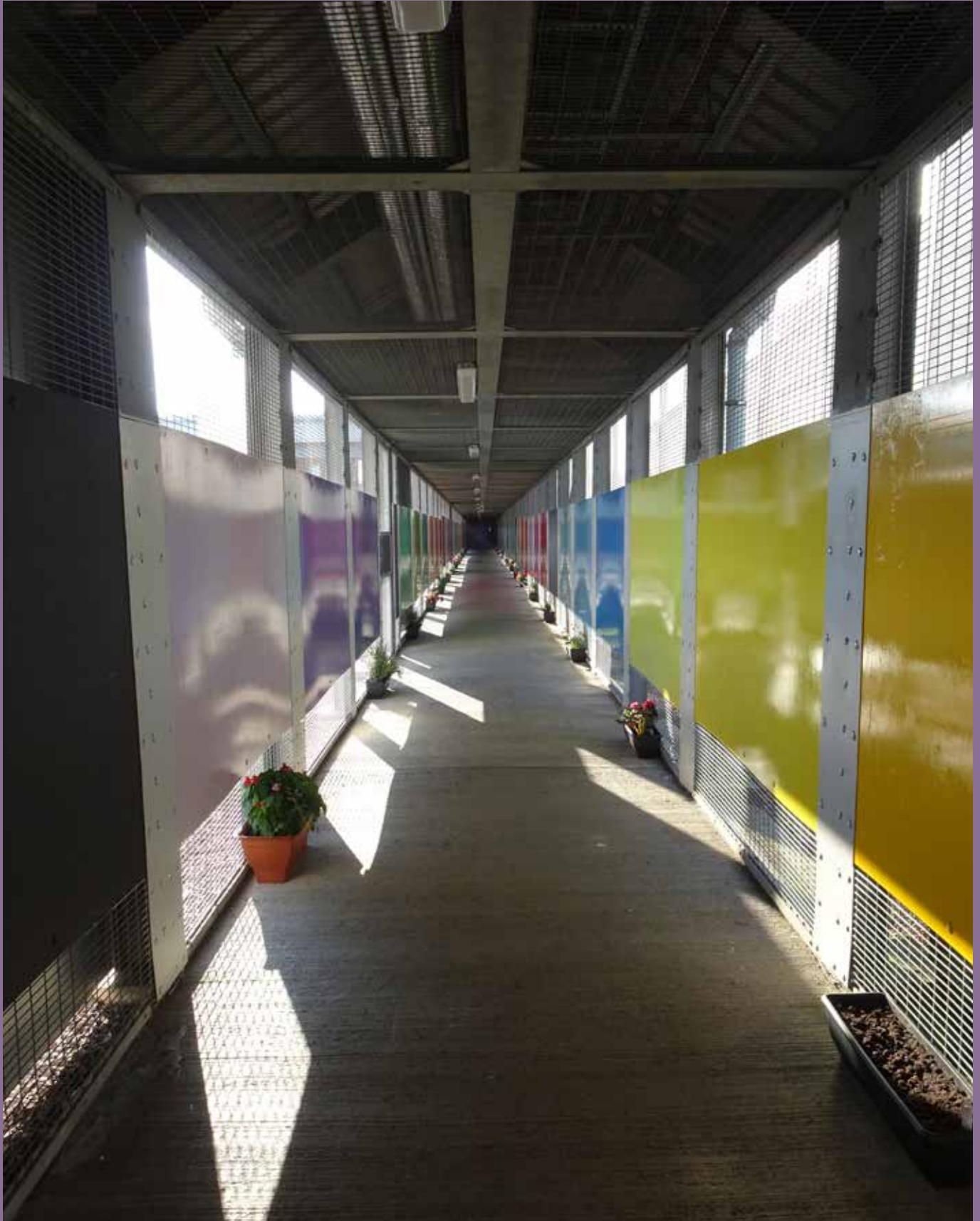
The SHRC provide an important contribution to every prison inspection by providing an expert view on whether prisoners' human rights are upheld. Their findings are incorporated into the HMIPS final report. They also assisted us in developing the revised quality indicators for our inspection and monitoring Standards, which are based on the [Panel Principles](#).



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





12

Prison liaison visits
May to March



17

CCU liaison visits
May to October



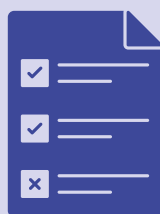
4

CCU
unannounced visits



954

Number of IPM
visits/calls made



469

Number of prisoner
requests responded to



7,389

Prison population
as of 31 March 21



1

Submissions/evidence
provided to the
Scottish Parliament



1

Freedom of Information
requests received
and responded to
within deadline



Completed
thematic reviews

1

THE NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM (NPM)

The NPMs response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant threat it posed to the rights of people in detention, was the primary focus of its work during this reporting period.

In March 2020, the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) provided advice to NPMs. It indicated that they must continue their visits to places of detention during COVID-19, while recognising that there would be necessary limitations to the scope of visits, to keep people living and working in detention, and those carrying out visits, safely. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the NPM has made significant efforts to continue monitoring places of detention through on-site visits, phone and video calls, and scrutiny of national and local data.

In March 2020, the NPM wrote to the Secretary of State for Justice, Robert Buckland QC MP, the then Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Humza Yousaf MSP and Justice Minister, Naomi Long MLA. HMIPS letters to the Scottish Government also emphasised key human rights concerns for people in detention, such as increased isolation and potential solitary confinement, the inherent challenge of physical distancing in places of detention and the loss of in-person social visits.

The NPM began collating members' evidence on the impact of COVID-19 in April 2020 and aim to produce a comprehensive report on the impact of the pandemic on people in all types of detention in the UK in the next reporting year.

In September 2020, the NPM responded to a Ministry of Justice (MOJ) consultation regarding strengthening Independent Scrutiny Bodies through legislation. The consultation requested views on giving the NPM a possible statutory basis and how this might be done. The NPM response covered the need for NPM legislation in line with the requirement under OPCAT, key features to be included in legislation and support for stronger statutory footings for other arm's-length bodies. The NPM continue to liaise with the MOJ regarding possible legislation.

As well as being part of the wider NPM, HMIPS is also one of six members that make up the NPM Scottish Sub-Group, which meets to discuss Scotland-specific issues. The Scottish Sub-Group met remotely on a regular basis during 2020-21, providing a forum for members to discuss their organisations' response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the key issues facing those in detention settings in Scotland.

In October 2020, the NPM Scottish Sub-Group formally responded to the CPT's report on their follow-up visit to Scotland in October 2019. The CPT's 2019 visit focused on the treatment of women in HMP Cornton Vale, overcrowding in the men's estate and long-term segregation in the men's estate.

Following this, in August 2021, the NPM published a [report](#) reviewing progress made in Scotland in implementing the recommendations made by the CPT following their visits in 2018 and 2019. The report was produced by independent researchers from the University of Bristol and assessed whether the issues relating to police custody and prisons by the CPT had been rectified, as well as taking into account the broader context in which COVID-19 had impacted on these detention environments.

5. SCRUTINY



HMIPS Journey through the COVID-19 Pandemic

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency situation, HMIPS temporarily suspended all prison, CCU and prisoner transport inspections, along with all monitoring services carried out by IPMs in March 2020.

However, HMIPS's statutory obligations continued during the emergency, and we were committed, where possible, and (most importantly) safely, to undertake visits to prison or CCU establishments and produce a report of our findings.

To allow us to fulfil our statutory duty, HMIPS developed an adapted methodology for inspection and monitoring, resulting in an [Independent Prison Monitoring - Remote Monitoring Framework](#) and [Prison and Court Custody Unit Liaison Visits Framework](#). This enabled us to continue to provide assurance to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, the wider community and to the [UK National Preventive Mechanism](#) about the conditions and treatment of prisoners in these exceptional circumstances from April 2020 with only a short break in any form of physical visiting by us.

Our adapted methodology focused on the key human rights issues contained in our [Standards for Inspecting and Monitoring Prisons in Scotland](#), which are followed during our normal inspection process.

We acknowledged that these were extremely difficult times for prisons and their establishments, and our guiding principle of 'do no harm' remained. We therefore placed an emphasis on identifying and sharing good practice in our reports. Any urgent issues identified during the visits were immediately escalated to the relevant senior management.

These first versions of the Frameworks underwent proof of concept testing in April 2020, and were subsequently formally reviewed in July 2020.

HMIPS also developed a [COVID-19 Health and Safety - Pandemic Policy](#), drawn from guidance from [Health Protection Scotland](#), [NHS Inform Scotland](#) and the [World Health Organization](#), to inform our staff of the correct processes to follow to keep themselves and others safe.

In May 2020 HMIPS welcomed back Healthcare Improvement Scotland and subsequently in November 2020, the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland partners as part of the inspection team for prison LVs. We reviewed our LV framework in the light of this and a revised version was published in, [Liaison Visit Framework - Prison and Court Custody Units](#).

In January 2021, following the First Minister's announcement, confirming that mainland Scotland would be put under lockdown restrictions similar to those imposed in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic, and as a direct result of the increased risk posed by the new variant of COVID-19, HMIPS took the difficult decision to again briefly suspend on-site monitoring and LVs to prisons and CCUs.

We were acutely aware that effective scrutiny of the conditions and treatment of prisoners was never more important than during a pandemic, when measures which the SPS may be obliged to put in place to deal with the increased risks in relation to COVID-19 could potentially impact on the freedoms, rights and health of prisoners. Remote monitoring and ad hoc visits by HMIPS staff continued to ensure scrutiny was maintained, particularly where our intelligence suggested there were concerns.

The decision to suspend on-site monitoring was not taken lightly, but had been taken in line with Scottish Government guidelines. Given the new variant, COVID-19 pressures and the potential for the vaccine to be rolled out in the next few months, reducing the risk of transmission was of paramount importance, and by reducing the number of people visiting the prisons and CCUs, HMIPS contributed to reducing the risk. These arrangements were reviewed by HMIPS fortnightly.

Where a visit was not possible, IPMs normally made weekly calls to prisoners, prison staff and management in all fifteen establishments, asking detailed questions about prisoners' access to the entitlements above. We also received updates from each prison regarding measures taken to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. We endeavoured to speak with as many prisoners as possible during this period and received feedback from male and female prisoners, young people, elderly prisoners, short- and long-term prisoners and those on remand.

In February 2021, following a risk assessment and survey of our team of volunteer IPMs, HMCIPS concluded that it would be possible to resume some element of on-site monitoring. We ensured a blended model of some on-site visits, where practical, together with phone calls to prisoners and SPS staff, and data analysis in line with the [Independent Prison Monitoring - Remote Monitoring Framework](#). IPMs and indeed all our staff making on-site visits did of course comply with all infection control measures required by the SPS in line with Health Protection Scotland and the Scottish Government guidance.

The findings of these LVs were reported to the appropriate bodies for information and action and published on our [website](#).

Revised Approach to Monitoring

As a responsible organisation, we made clear that individual IPMs were best placed to assess the risks for themselves using the wealth of publicly available guidance including the HMIPS risk assessment. A significant number of IPMs resigned or suspended their activities on health grounds. We miss their contribution but fully respect their decision.

After conducting a survey of prisoners and analysing the content of the boxes provided in every prison hall for prisoners to place requests to see an IPM, we took the decision to remove the boxes in all 15 prison establishments. We took steps however to refresh and enhance the visibility of posters in key strategic parts of the prison to advertise the independent monitoring Freephone helpline and arranged for copies of the one page summaries of monitoring findings in the previous quarter to be distributed to each cell, or made available to all prisoners.

As in all years since the inception of prison monitoring in 2015, themes have emerged from our monitoring activity.

COVID-19 – In general, IPMs reported that prisons were thorough and professional in implementing national guidance to reduce transmission risks of COVID-19. Physical distancing was demonstrated in all establishments and essential cleaning and sanitisation was maintained throughout the period of the pandemic. Clear signage was evident as reminders of the guidance for prisoners, staff and visitors. IPMs

acknowledged that this had clearly been a stressful and difficult period and noted that the level of compliance, understanding and effort from both prisoners and staff alike to maintain well-functioning establishments was commendable, especially during periods of national lockdown.

Unfortunately, however, despite the best efforts of staff there were substantial outbreaks of positive COVID-19 cases in several establishments during the year. These outbreaks were managed by individual establishments in liaison with Public Health Scotland. The measures taken to reduce the risk of transmission included full or partial lockdown of establishments with prisoners and staff requiring to self-isolate. These measures helped protect lives, with very few COVID-19-related deaths, but did result in temporary losses of basic entitlements and diminished provision for prisoners.

Regime/decency/health and wellbeing – Basic human rights in relation to access to showers and fresh air were at times suspended in the early days of the response to the pandemic and to individual outbreaks, particularly for prisoners who were having to isolate or where serious outbreaks occurred affecting large numbers of staff and prisoners. For extended periods of the year, the prison regime continued with severe restrictions with time out of cell a key concern for IPMs. Far too many prisoners were locked up for more than 20 hours a day, sometimes 22 or even 23 hours a day. Access to healthcare remained, although processes in some establishments were inevitably altered. Occasionally, prisoners expressed concern to IPMs about waiting times and lack of face-to-face contact with health professionals. IPMs received assurances regarding in-cell provision of activities during times of tightened restrictions, including access to in-cell toiletries, education, physical fitness packs and wellbeing materials.

Purposeful activity – During periods of lockdown with tight restrictions, only essential work parties functioned in the prisons. In extreme situations, prison officers maintained laundry, cleaning and kitchen services during outbreaks. IPMs observed instances of some regimes opening up more fully with education, gymnasium and non-essential work parties but they were all functioning with extremely limited numbers throughout the year. In many establishments there were examples of innovative practice to keep prisoners

engaged and these are detailed in the individual prison summaries. IPMs were pleased to note that access to faith services and religious worship was maintained in some form throughout the pandemic.

Progression – IPMs continued to receive multiple requests regarding perceived barriers to progression from prisoners. These concerned the suspension of offending behaviour programmes, delays in temporary release applications and general queries related to risk management decisions and integrated case management processes. These issues have been raised at both a local and national level and IPMs will continue to monitor the situation in each establishment. There is no doubt that the pandemic further exacerbated the significant and long-established problems with progression, notably in relation to backlogs with programme assessments and securing access to programmes. Accordingly HMIPS has now launched a thematic review in 2021 on progression with IPM support.

Family contact – The suspension of physical visits in all establishments during national lockdown periods was extremely difficult for many prisoners across Scotland. IPMs welcomed the return of face-to-face visits, albeit with COVID-19 precautions now in place. However, IPMs have overwhelmingly reported positive feedback from prisoners on the introduction of in-cell mobile telephones during this period to mitigate the loss of contact with family and friends. Similarly, the introduction of virtual visits has been a welcome initiative and despite limited take-up in some establishments the feedback from those prisoners using the service has been extremely positive. HMIPS believe the case for continuing access to in-cell telephony and video visit technology after the pandemic is overwhelming.

Deaths in Custody – Whilst IPMs have no jurisdiction in this area, we recognise the grief and distress felt by families, prisoners and prison staff when any death in custody occurs. A number of establishments have been affected by such tragic instances in the last year and HMIPS/IPMs have had layperson representation on all Death in Prison Learning and Review Meetings held during this period and will continue to do so.

Conclusion

Whilst commending the SPS and the private prisons on their outstanding success in keeping COVID-19-related deaths to under 10 during the reporting period, HMIPS was concerned, and remains concerned about the breaches in human rights and adverse consequences of the protective measures which the SPS adopted.

With the support of the Scottish Human Rights Commission, HMIPS raised these issues with the SPS, PHS and with the then Cabinet Secretary for Justice. The SPS undoubtedly made determined efforts to resolve these issues and limit the impact of the restrictions imposed on prisoners, but public health advice and in some cases the layout of establishments inhibited their efforts to protect lives while also safeguarding full compliance with core human rights. Where maintaining separate living spaces for positive or suspected cases was impossible, prisoners were sometimes isolated for far longer periods of time than their comparators in the community.

Our future monitoring strategy

The ability to physically walk round a prison and observe actions and practices directly will remain the gold standard for effective monitoring, but the series of phone calls with prisoners nevertheless provided an excellent source of information on what was happening in Scotland's prisons. Indeed some prisoners indicated they were more comfortable talking openly and honestly over the phone than when speaking face-to-face with IPMs, where their interaction was more visible to others. Accordingly, phone calls will continue to be part of the monitoring toolbox and our monitoring strategy going forward and will provide a quick, flexible option should future events interrupt our physical monitoring programme.

We will continue to focus on the issues highlighted above and encourage the SPS to ease restrictions, and return establishments to a fuller and more progressive regime as quickly as possible.

We will also run a series of pilots in 2021-22 on revised approaches to monitoring to ensure it is as effective as possible in supporting prisoners' rights. We will encourage IPMs to attend more frequently where they wish to do so, and to feel empowered to take more direct ownership and control for the organisation

and recording of rotas and team meetings and action following meetings with the Governor in Charge (GIC).

We will make further progress implementing the recommendations arising from the review by Linda Pollock into assuring our systems and processes; we have currently implemented approximately two thirds of the recommendations, with work continuing on the remaining action points. Several of these relate to the planned development of a new improved recording system to replace PRIAM, which we hope to progress subject to funding availability.

Revised Approach for CCUs

HMIPS developed a risk algorithm that was populated by weekly information sharing with the CCUs and information received from other agencies including the SPS. This provided intelligence to inform the scheduling of visits. More information on the risk algorithm can be found in the [Liaison Visit Framework - Prison and Court Custody Units](#).

On a weekly basis, HMIPS contacted each of the GEOAmey Court Managers to confirm numbers attending, with a focus on understanding the CCU response to COVID-19.

Where it was deemed appropriate, through telephone calls, information received from GEOAmey, or results from the risk-based HMIPS Liaison Data Algorithm, HMIPS conducted a one-day liaison visit to one of the CCUs.

Liaison visits to CCUs had the following functions:

- To ensure scrutiny of CCUs continued and were grounded in human rights, looking at the treatment and conditions of those held in detention.
- To offer support to the CCU management and staff.
- To provide assurance to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice on the SPS, NHS, GEOAmey, and the SCTS response to the COVID-19 pandemic for those in custody.
- To garner intelligence and information to make informed decisions on future HMIPS priorities.

- To identify good practice that could be shared.

HMIPS assimilated information prior to the liaison visits to select the CCU to be visited and to contribute to the focus of the visit, and consequently developed evidence-based findings utilising a number of different techniques. These included:

- Calls to the CCU Manager prior to the visit.
- Obtaining information and documents from the SCTS and the court inspected.
- Shadowing and observing staff as they performed their duties within the CCU.
- Interviewing custodies and staff on a one-to-one basis.
- Weekly calls to SPS where the transport contract can be discussed.
- Inspecting a wide range of facilities impacting on both custodies and staff.
- Reviewing policies, procedures and performance reports.

The information gathered facilitated the compilation of a report into the CCU against the modified Standards used, consisting of a detailed narrative against each of the Standards inspected. A list of recommendations and good practice arising from the liaison visit concluded the report.

A visit took place to all 17 CCUs that were operational in the first 9 months of the pandemic in Scotland.

The adapted inspection methodology developed in response to COVID-19 will be kept under continual review and, as soon as it is safe and reasonable to do so, consideration will be given to recommencing full CCU inspections.

Findings from any CCU Liaison Visits and issues that were highlighted from weekly CCU telephone calls, were reported to:

- the Cabinet Secretary for Justice; and
- the Scottish Government Justice Directorate, GEOAmey, Police Scotland, the SPS, and the SCTS for information and action.

HMIPS ensured that all relevant parties were kept informed, and any good practice or recommendations identified were monitored.

Prison Liaison Visits Findings

Introduction

In general terms, prisons were calm and orderly, with a newly established 'core day' regime and measures to protect the staff and prisoners that were kept regularly under review.

It is commendable that Inspectors identified 103 elements of good practice as well as identifying 173 action points. Overall, every prison in Scotland had performed well in managing COVID-19-related risks and they deserve praise for their continuing efforts to manage the acute impact being felt by the pandemic. However, HMIPS remains concerned that the systemic issues impacting the Scottish Prison Service as mentioned in the Introduction endure, and both inspections and monitoring identified significant concerns with dignity and the inability to deliver anything more than a very restricted regime. We were particularly concerned with the lack of impact assessments on vulnerable populations.

Encouraging observations

Physical distancing

In all prisons visited, inspectors observed physical distancing protocols and approaches being respected. Both prisoners and staff demonstrated resilience and flexibility with the rapidly changing requirements.

For example, in HMP Dumfries, the resilience and flexibility shown by the management team and frontline staff in dealing with the sustained pressure exerted by two large outbreaks of COVID-19 was impressive when the level of outbreak required support from other prisons, and staff had to step in to complete tasks normally undertaken by prisoners. The positive working relationships developed between staff and prisoners supported the calm and ordered atmosphere.

Food

Kitchens had reduced the size of the workforce to comply with guidelines but, despite this, menus had seen minimal changes. Staff in some prisons had worked particularly hard to provide meals to all prisoners during periods when the prison was locked down and prisoners were unable to work in the kitchen or collect their meals.

Talk to Me (TTM)

Paperwork was checked and in the main found to be of a good standard, with case conferences held within the required timeframes. Where Inspectors did attend case conferences, they observed caring, compassionate and non-judgemental approaches by all staff. Prisoners were given ample opportunity to discuss how best they could move forward. We would however still like to see all the recommendations from the Expert Review on Mental Health being completed.

Separation and Reintegration Units (SRUs)

Inspectors visited every SRU during the round of LVs and most were being managed at full capacity. All SRUs were found to be clean, orderly and well run and continued to run their standard regimes with all prisoners. Prisoners spoken to indicated that they had been treated well, confirmed daily access to their entitlements and had received both face-to-face and virtual visits depending on the level of restrictions imposed. However, the CPT report of 2019 was strongly critical of the segregation; in response we are working with the University of Edinburgh on a thematic review of SRUs. Worryingly inspectors and IPMs noted a high prevalence of apparently mentally unwell prisoners.

Access to families

The introduction of virtual visits provided an excellent alternative to face-to-face visits when they were restricted. Each prison had local plans in place for managing access to virtual visits technology and for ensuring that they gained maximum benefit from these assets. The Inspectors spoke to a number of prisoners about the implementation of virtual visits, the majority of whom were positive about their experience. This was particularly true of foreign national prisoners and those with elderly or infirm family/friends who were not able

to attend the prison in person. HMIPS are delighted that these will continue.

The introduction of mobile phones very quickly became the main conduit through which prisoners maintained close family contact. Prisoners appreciated the ability to maintain contact with family and friends from the privacy of their own cell at times that were convenient to their family. The case for continuing in-cell telephony after the pandemic is overwhelming.

Legal representation

In some establishments we saw increased use of virtual visits technology to support access to legal representation, along with greater use of video links for court appearances, sometimes saving long journeys in prison escort vans for very short court appearances. We remain very concerned about the disproportionate number of prisoners on remand.

Access to fresh air

Prisons had introduced a structured exercise programme to dovetail with their own staffing arrangements, facilities and the wider programme of activity and regimes. This meant that there were varying degrees of time set aside for exercise and indeed when those periods could take place. It was evident, however, that prisons were trying to get the most out of their core day activity and kept their arrangements under constant review. Significantly, the human right entitlement of access to fresh air was routinely compromised during COVID-19 outbreaks.

Communication

Inspectors gathered good evidence that information about regime changes and other impacts of the pandemic had been communicated regularly and clearly to prisoners to help them understand the situation, the response by the SPS, and what they needed to do to keep themselves safe.

Access to education

Learning Centres, run by Fife College, were closed to prisoners during the first lockdown period between March and August 2020. The College produced a number of in-cell Learner Packs which were distributed

to prisoners via residential hall staff. Prisoner feedback was sought on the packs and used to inform the development of further topics. Fife College staff liaised with SPS staff to ensure any Open University students were able to continue their studies.

All Learning Centres re-opened in August 2020 with COVID-19 related physical distancing and hygiene arrangements in place. As a consequence, reduced numbers of prisoners were able to attend. Local timetabling arrangements were put in place to ensure equity of opportunity for all prisoner groups. Learning Centres offered a similar range of programmes, largely at SCQF level 4-5, consisting of core skills, communications, ICT, numeracy, humanities, art and music. Most also offered a limited range of National 5 and Higher subjects. Nonetheless the availability of learning for all prisoners was extremely limited.

Access to employment

When the first lockdown was introduced, all work parties were put on hold except those essential to the operation of the prison. These key work parties continued throughout all phases of the COVID-19 restrictions, with appropriate safety measures in place, such as reduced numbers where necessary and breaks staggered to encourage physical distancing. As a consequence of closing these non-essential work parties, the employment and training opportunities available to prisoners was significantly reduced. Most prisoner vocational training was suspended, but a few essential work parties still continued to offer certification for useful employability awards, such as British Institute of Cleaners (BICs) and Royal Environmental Health Institute Scotland (REHIS) elementary food hygiene.

Wherever possible, prison managers endeavoured to maintain opportunities for prisoners to stay active by using a risk-based approach. For example, through increased numbers on the industrial cleaning work party and supporting prisoners suffering from the psychological effects of being unable to attend their normal work party by refurbishing external wooden benches in the prison grounds.

Access to gym and fitness

During the initial lockdown, prison gymnasias were closed, in line with national guidance. Physical Training Instructors (PTIs) worked creatively to find alternative approaches to support prisoners to exercise and developed detailed and helpful in-cell workout routines and options for outdoor exercise. Some prisons also made available additional pieces of exercise equipment for prisoners to use in their cells. Some prisons used in-house TV channels to support prisoners with in-cell exercise, showing exercise presentations and showing workout DVDs.

When restrictions were eased, a reduced timetable of physical exercise was offered but prisoners were able to attend the gym albeit in lower numbers. Gymnasias were reconfigured to allow safe use, in line with safety guidance when they re-opened after the initial lockdown.

HMIPS regrets the automatic closure of gyms especially the small hall gyms.

Access to religious services

During many of our visits, services in the multi-faith centres had been halted in line with HPS guidance, but the Chaplaincy Team were continuing to provide pastoral support and respond to requests from individual prisoners. Where possible, prisons were using TV channels and radio broadcasts to provide further opportunities for individuals to access religious messages.

Progression

Positive partnership working between prison-based social work and the establishments was most evident where the prison-based social work team had been well supported by both the local authority and the prison. This consistent support assisted the service to fulfil its role in relation to key processes for progression. This included access to technology to enable staff to work from home. Enabling safe access to the establishment helped to ensure the social work team remained visible to staff and prisoners and continued to have a presence.

Significant effort, and some innovation, ensured that the enhanced ICM process was largely sustained during

the pandemic. Other than a brief period where this was unavoidably suspended, establishments ensured that case conferences were taking place, especially pre-release meetings. Engagement from community-based social work was continued, with participation even improving in some areas, through increased use of remote attendance.

In HMP Greenock, SPS HQ worked with the prison to ensure that prisoners could have their voice heard with regards to progression. Prisoners were able to raise their concerns and have them heard by key SPS staff. It reflected well on the SPS and the prison that they viewed this engagement as important, although progress since that event has been slower than we would have liked.

Prisoners on release

The pandemic accelerated the development of new ways to engage and support prisoners. All establishments were attempting to maximise use of technology to sustain important family relationships and the range of supports, which are vital for successful transitions from custody to the community. The efforts being made reflected well on the importance establishments placed on family contact, and their understanding of the part these relationships play in supporting integration and desistance from further offending.

As a result of the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, establishments had to redeploy and re-purpose staff. Staff demonstrated adaptability and flexibility in supporting transitions to the community. There were also examples of sound leadership at all levels, with staff rising to the challenge of maintaining provision of services within a prison environment during a pandemic. Personal officers became increasingly involved in connecting prisoners with agency support and advice. Link centre staff continued to act as a key conduit to partner agencies unable to visit in person, whilst also supporting the wider needs of the establishment.

Over the past year, despite the impact of COVID-19, agencies worked together to provide holistic support pre- and post-liberation. In some instances, there were examples of personalised throughcare approaches characterised by services ensuring the right supports were made available from the right agencies at the

right time. In one establishment a well-established multi-agency forum had been an invaluable asset during the pandemic for planning for all prisoners due for release.

HMP YOI Grampian's relationships and communication with partner agencies and organisations around pre-release planning and the immediate post liberation period was highly commendable.

In HMP Dumfries, the instinct to pull together prison-based and community-based partners to plan for release of all prisoners was strong. The Multi-Agency Community Reintegration Board (MACRIB) meeting is the most obvious example of this, attempting to address the absence of ICM processes for short-term prisoners and the suspension of Throughcare Support Officers (TSOs). During the pandemic this instinct has also ensured that planning for early release was effectively established quickly.

In HMP Perth, the action undertaken by the pre-release planning team to facilitate work experience and employment opportunities with Balfour Beatty was highly commendable and may be capable of being replicated with other companies and by other prisons.

Organisational effectiveness

In general terms, staff reported they were comfortable with their role during the COVID-19 core day. Most of the prison staff that Inspectors spoke with, thought that management were keeping them well informed on ever-changing developments. In general terms, Inspectors felt that morale and motivation amongst staff appeared to be strong, and both SPS HQ and local prison management are to be congratulated on that. There were also some good local examples of effective and compassionate support for staff on COVID-19-related sick leave.

Health and wellbeing

Overall, the NHS, in collaboration with SPS, had performed well. NHS health boards had an effective governance structure with clear lines of reporting and accountability. This allowed normal escalation and governance processes to continue during the pandemic. In addition, lines of communication were evident between NHS boards and prisoner healthcare teams to discuss workforce planning, clinical demand

and the allocation of resources, sometimes between prisons.

In HMP Inverness, a role was developed to focus on infection control processes within the prison as well as health promotion for prisoners. This role had been a success with the member of staff taking responsibility for ordering PPE, reviewing the latest guidance and feeding back to staff when any guidance changes.

In HMP Castle Huntly, all mental health, occupational therapy and substance misuse patients were assessed against a 'red, amber, green' score to establish who would require contact during the pandemic. There was ongoing assessment of these patients to identify any change in risk levels.

Areas for improvement

Talk to Me (TTM)

During the first few months of the first lockdown, Inspectors gathered evidence, in some prisons, of a fairly dramatic increase in the number of people being managed on TTM. In HMP Perth, for example, the number on TTM had increased by 200% between April and July 2020. Conversely some establishments such as HMP Inverness were able to evidence a significant reduction in those on TTM during the pandemic in comparison with 2019.

Rule 41 isolation on health grounds

Inspectors had the opportunity to speak to a number of people who were either being managed on Rule 41 or had been in the recent past. It was evident that there was some inconsistent practice as some prisons were able to provide access to phones, showers and fresh air on a regular basis from the start of lockdown whilst in some other prisons this was not the case. It should be noted that the SPS Pandemic Plan Guidance did try to address that inconsistency, but this issue remained and remains an aspect of concern.

Family contact

Some prisoners continued to express frustration at the time taken to receive a mobile phone after admission. Access to mobile phones continued to be problematic, with many prisoners experiencing significant delays in receiving a phone.

Access to education and employment

Learning Centres closed again in December 2020 due to further COVID-19 restrictions and remained closed until March 2021. During this time prisoners had no access to tutors to support their learning and no structured learning opportunities.

The length of the pandemic gave opportunities for the SPS and Fife College to explore options for the provision of more remote access to learning and tutor support to respond to future circumstances. Where the Education Centres were up and running at the time of our visits, we saw a full timetable being delivered, albeit with reduced attendance numbers to observe physical distancing and safe working practices. In several instances, however, participation rates remained disappointing even accounting for the reduced capacity available.

In HMP Castle Huntly, the only open prison in Scotland, the impact of the initial lockdown in the spring of 2020 was significant, with all external work placement opportunities being suspended for around 80 prisoners.

Education and employment remains a key concern for HMIPS. In consequence, Education Scotland are working with HMIPS to undertake a thematic review of Education during COVID-19.

Access to gym and fitness

While the closure of the main gymnasiums in line with national guidance was understandable, HMIPS did question whether the satellite gyms in the residential areas might have been opened up more quickly where strict adherence to household bubbles and robust cleaning could be facilitated.

Communications

In a few cases the current regime was not easily visible within the residential areas and in some prisons, and inspectors found insufficient evidence of important notices related to COVID-19 being translated into other languages to accommodate those where English is not their first language. SPS HQ should review the support available to foreign nationals to provide a consistent level of support, including increasing the use of translation services and the availability of core regime information in other languages.

Access to religious services

SPS and Prison Chaplaincy Teams should develop and stream standard religious content or produce material on DVDs to improve the services available when access to communal services has to be restricted.

Progression

During the pandemic, the delivery of group work programmes had been most affected by physical distancing restrictions. Establishments continued to complete generic programme assessments to avoid increasing the backlog. However, there were concerns about the backlogs, availability of programmes, and the impact this will have for individuals and their progression pathway. The pandemic-imposed restrictions also made community access difficult and problematic for prisoners hoping to evidence progress in preparing for release.

Restrictions imposed during the pandemic, including physical distancing and travelling, had affected access justice social work staff had to individuals. Phone and other remote contact was vital, but access to key electronic recording systems was a recurring issue during the liaison visits, highlighting problems associated with home working for prison-based social work staff. Having easy access to SPS systems is a key part of case/risk management monitoring and planning and is therefore essential for completing assessments and reports.

Where there were larger numbers of prisoners making applications for temporary release, the inadequacy of systems for communicating progress with these applications was highlighted.

The SPS must continue to prioritise clearing the backlog of progression paperwork, identifying and addressing any inhibitors, to ensure that prisoners' rights are being respected. They must also work with partner agencies to find technical solutions to resolve local issues accessing SPS systems and data where that is crucial to effective joint working.

The SPS should review their personal officer roles to ensure staff have sufficient time to engage effectively in their designated roles as Personal Officers and in support of ICM activity and pre-release planning. They should also reinstate offender management programmes as quickly as possible and work creatively to clear the backlog of prisoners requiring programmes.

Prisoners on release

Over the last year there had been a specific focus on whether health and social care services were working collaboratively. This is particularly pertinent as the SPS strategy moves towards a more holistic, needs-based response to meeting prisoner outcomes in prison. As prisons addressed the needs of an increasingly large ageing and vulnerable population with complex needs, it was clear that the integration of health and social care services has yet to attain consistency across the prison estate.

In all establishments the absence of the TSO role was keenly felt during the pandemic. The TSO role was seen as removing important barriers to accessing key services, resulting in a smoother transition for individuals, supporting them back in the community and acting as a key conduit for maximising engagement with community supports. While there are services providing throughcare support, the absence of the TSO was perceived as a significant gap in provision at a crucial time. This loss of support was particularly accentuated where access to services was curtailed during the restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic.

Access to Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) staff for prisoners decreased during the pandemic. Whilst advice was available via leaflets, signposting to helplines, and officer knowledge, it should be recognised that welfare and benefits advice is a dynamic, specialist area of knowledge. Some establishments have developed strong partnerships with DWP and CAB staff, and link

centre staff in particular have worked hard to sustain contacts. Where resources for external services to maintain a strong profile in prisons are scarce, establishments need to work hard to sustain these relationships and ensure that partnership arrangements are sufficient to meet the needs of individuals due for release.

Homelessness and pressures on housing providers during the pandemic appeared to be having an impact on the availability of accommodation for prisoners on release. Some prisoners were unsure about their destination on release and expressed a level of anxiety about temporary hostel accommodation or imposing on family members during a time of household restrictions. For others, the standard practice was an office appointment on the day of release and allocation of accommodation available at that time. In a number of liaison visits over the past year, practice had fallen short of the SHORE (Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone) standards. To support reintegration, it remains essential that prisoners have clarity about accommodation and housing prior to liberation so they can be 'confident, optimistic and motivated about returning to the community with a positive destination' as per the national guidance.

Health and wellbeing

The reintroduction of greater purposeful and rehabilitative activity is an essential element of wellbeing recovery from COVID-19 restrictions.

The enduring issues of a lack of effective digital platforms consistent with the community and the recruitment and retention of clinical staff remain. The fabric and condition of healthcare facilities, particularly in HMP Barlinnie and HMP Greenock, stood out as inadequate for effective infection control and treatment.

HMIPS was also concerned at the management of late arrivals to the prisons imposing lengthy working hours and measures that were at times not conducive to safe practice.

Court Custody Unit Liaison Visits and Prisoner Transport Findings

ENCOURAGING OBSERVATIONS

Hygiene: protection from COVID-19

The principal drive behind the HMIPS Pandemic Emergency Liaison Visits was to ensure that all was being done to protect people from harm. This included steps being taken to comply with the Scottish Government guidelines to protect custodies, staff and others from contracting coronavirus (COVID-19).

Once the initial response had been observed as inconsistent, HMIPS were encouraged to note that in the majority of courts visited, hygiene and infection control were taken very seriously and the response to Scottish Government guidelines implemented as soon as practicable.

GEOAmey are to be commended for their speedy response to and in more recent liaison visit reports infection control issues were no longer featuring as a recommendation and were in-built as routine practice and procedure.

Cell Sharing Risk Assessment (CSRA)

At the start of the visits, the cell sharing risk assessment had not been amended to take count of the emerging pandemic risk. It was noted that not all CCUs were asking custodies questions that determined their possible exposure to COVID-19, any past or current symptoms or their awareness of the physical distancing rules. This therefore prevented staff from making an accurate assessment of risk in respect of a custody's safety and that of others. It also impacted on the ability of CCU staff to make informed decisions for custodies sharing cells.

In addition, no record was being made on Personal Escort Records (PERs) or Geotrack (the GEOAmey IT system), of these questions being asked and what answers were provided. As such, this exposed staff to the possibility of future complaints in response to which they could not evidence that adequate steps had been taken in respect of COVID-19 for a custody in their care.

When recommendations were first made by HMIPS to address these issues, GEOAmey responded without delay and ensured that a series of questions in respect of risk associated with COVID-19 were added to their CSRA document and implemented nationally. Hand sanitiser was also supplied and provided to all custodies on arrival, with further availability being made throughout their stay.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Early visits found inconsistencies in the allocation and use of PPE equipment, where some managers allowed staff to determine themselves what they wanted to wear and when. For example, Inspectors observed some to be wearing masks and gloves and some not. Physical distancing within the CCU was again something that at the start was not routinely monitored and addressed by managers. When custodies were searched by staff full PPE comprising mask, gloves and apron were not always worn.

Initially, Inspectors observed in a number of CCUs that custodies being taken from the Court Custody Vehicle (CCV) to the CCU were handcuffed to a member of GEOAmey staff and neither wore masks. It was established that custodies were not offered a mask to wear, and the wearing of a mask by the member of staff was a personal preference. It was clear that this impacted significantly on the rights of the custody as they were not given the opportunity to protect themselves, unlike the member of staff.

When recommendations were made by HMIPS to address these issues, GEOAmey responded quickly and provided instructions nationally to all CCU managers that staff should wear defined levels of PPE at all times whilst operating in the CCU. Any member of staff searching a custody was required to wear full PPE and all members of staff escorting a custody from a CCV were required to wear a mask to protect themselves and the custody at all times.

Cleaning

Since the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions, the cleaning schedules for the SCTS cleaning staff was variable and inconsistent. Some were amended to provide an additional daily visit to the CCU to carry out cleaning of thoroughfares and toilets, whereas some

maintained the pre-COVID-19 scheduled daily visit. However, it has been noted that the SCTS did provide additional cleaning for cells at all CCUs between use or when a custody was suspected of, or confirmed to have, COVID-19. HMIPS welcomed this commendable response.

GEOAme staff were observed to generally maintain good hygiene levels in the CCUs, through the periodic use of antiseptic wipes on keys, surfaces, handles and doors, and most importantly in the interview rooms between use by custodies.

In summary, the response, whilst variable and inconsistent in the early stages, rapidly became controlled and consistent, with infection control a primary concern robustly managed.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Virtual Court Appearances

As with previous full inspection reports, HMIPS continue to recommend that every effort should be made to make greater use of the video-link process between Sheriff Courts, police stations, and prisons.

The benefits from reducing the number of custodies arriving from prison for short procedural appearances where there is no likelihood of them being released, and for those arriving from police stations located some distance from the CCU are clear.

Figures obtained from COPFS have shown that in April 2020 there were 110 custodies appearing in court by video-link from police custody units, and in December 2020 this had increased to 471 with January 2021 showing a further increase to 535. The virtual model pilot at Falkirk Sheriff Court is a good example of how this work is progressing and HMIPS hopes that if evaluated as successful, will see a roll-out nationally in the not-too-distant future.

Allocation and time in Cells

COVID-19 Scottish Government guidance for physical distancing states that the fundamental science around distance and transmission remains unchanged. Risk increases with proximity to an infected individual. Moving closer than two metres therefore increases the risk of transmission from infected individuals occurring.

A well-executed CSRA may identify a multitude of reasons as to why a custody requires a single cell. It is possible in certain circumstances that the CSRA identifies that each cell in a CCU should be single occupancy due to the assessment of risk, for example:

Single cell requirement	
1 x adult male	1 x adult female
1 x male under 21	1 x female under 21
1 x male under 18	1 x female under 18
1 x offence protection	1 x violence against others
1 x constant observation (mental health issues or on the SPS Talk to Me Suicide Strategy)	1 x COVID-19 or other infectious disease issues

A recent finding was that custodies attending from a Separation and Reintegration Unit (SRU) within a prison were not being kept apart from other custodies and being permitted to share a cell. We encourage the SPS to work with GEOAme to ensure this is prevented in future.

GEOAme have sole responsibility for the allocation of cells within the CCUs and should not be influenced by other agencies or factors to deviate from their assessments. The expectation on numbers and virus transmission risk therefore should be that cells are single occupancy by default unless a CSRA clearly determines otherwise. Inspectors frequently found cells clearly marked for one custody accommodating two. Physical distancing was not possible for occupants, as the photograph below shows:



Inspectors also found cells with markings suggesting suitability for double occupancy which clearly did not allow physical distancing.



Prison custodies cell allocation

The term “bubble” is often used to describe a cluster of people with whom individuals spend core time during the pandemic.

Such bubbles are encouraged by the Scottish Government and are currently operating within Scotland’s prisons where small numbers of prisoners operate together, similar to a household bubble. This, however, will only be effective if it is managed properly and members of that bubble are not exposed to others.

The Inspectors found during the liaison visits that the PER forms accompanying a custody from a prison do not detail if that custody is part of a bubble within a prison.

Further investigation found that the majority of CCU staff were not aware that prisons were operating bubbles and what they should do in respect of managing that custody on arrival at the CCU.

It was found that custodies attending a CCU from the same prison were almost always placed together in the same cell, on a number of occasions both custodies were part of different bubbles from within that prison. It is clear that working hard to keep bubbles operating as they should in a prison by keeping prisoners apart, is of little or no use if they are then placed in a cell with

individuals from other bubbles whilst staying in a CCU. We encourage the SPS to work with GEOAmey and others to minimise such risks.

Marked papers/scheduling/Court start times

Inspectors found that, in general, a procedure existed in each of the CCUs to try and ensure that all agencies involved in the daily processing of custodies were made aware of each custody’s health, location, and movements. The intention was to establish a priority and reduce time in custody to allow the safe reception of those custodies still being held in police stations.

Generally, the processes were similar with the GEOAmey Team Manager sending an early email to the partners informing them of the names of the custodies arriving in the CCU that day, which custodies would be arriving in the CCU first, and which would be held back at police stations or prisons via the Health and Safety 9D notification process, to await cell availability in the CCU. A point of note is that there was no evidence of any 9D forms being served by GEOAmey on the SPS to retain custodies, only Police Scotland.

Throughout the visits there was evidence that this process was not entirely effective in assisting the efficient movement of custodies or reducing the lengthy periods of time custodies were spending in shared cells.

Our evidence suggested that there were a number of reasons for this:

- Court times can vary from 10:00 to 14:00. Despite this variety of start times, the GEOAmey contract required custodies to be in court custody by 09:00. In practice, this meant that some custodies were arriving in the CCUs from 07:30 onwards and placed in a cell, often with another custody, in full knowledge that they would not appear in court for over five hours.
- Inspectors frequently found evidence of custody papers having been marked by the COPFS arriving with the CCU and defence agents for custodies that were not yet present in the CCU.
- Some papers did not arrive from the COPFS for custodies until late afternoon. This prolonged the amount of time custodies spent in the CCU cells

and in transit, and as such increased exposure time in respect of COVID-19. It was acknowledged that some papers were late for good reason, for example, late arrival of reports from Police Scotland, additional information being required, and, for decisions to be made in respect of possible petition cases. However, it was clear that the list of names provided by CCU managers at the start of the day detailing the custodies who are held in the CCU first were not always prioritised by the COPFS.

- Inspectors regularly found custodies were being brought from prison to a CCU only to find that they were not required by the court. Whilst inspecting Dundee Sheriff Court, Inspectors found that on 7 December 2020 seven custodies attended the CCU from a prison only three were required for the court, and four made unnecessary journeys and as such took up cell space in close proximity to staff and custodies. Further enquiry found that nationally on this date 16% of all custodies brought to a CCU from a prison were either not required to appear on the day or were known not to be required before they left the prison.
- To determine if this was an exception the figures were again gathered nationally on 11 January 2021. On this occasion 25% of all custodies brought to a CCU from a prison were either not required to appear on the day or were known not to be required before they left the prison.
- If this one issue alone could be addressed, it would have a significant impact on the unnecessary movement of custodies, providing not only a financial saving but promoting single-cell allocation and making a significant contribution to reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. We urge the SPS, the SCTS, and GEOAmeY to explore how this can be addressed.

External visitors to the CCU

The vast majority of CCUs had stopped permitting defence agents and other external agencies from entering the cell area during the early stages of the COVID-19 restrictions. Most custody interviews were seen to be carried out using interview rooms separated by glass partitions. It was noted, however, that due to the layout of some CCUs, solicitors were permitted to

enter the corridors to gain access to interview rooms to speak with their clients. Inspectors noted that some solicitors did not wear masks or gloves, and it appeared to be a personal choice that was exposing others to unnecessary risk. It was clear that this was a difficult situation for CCU staff to address and HMIPS recommended a consistent approach.

Thematic Reviews

Who Cares? A follow-up review of the lived experience of older prisoners in Scotland's prisons

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

This report highlighted 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 had 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.

The pressures of 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 very limited accessible cellular accommodation.

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

Access to offending behaviour programmes for this group of prisoners was reported in 2017 as challenging, with 95% of this population not taking 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.

Death in Custody review

In November 2019, the then Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Humza Yousef announced that he had asked HMCIPS, in accordance with section 7(2)(d) of the Prisons (Scotland) Act 1989, to undertake an independent review into the response to deaths in prison custody.

The Review was instructed to enable the identification of and to make recommendations for areas for improvement to ensure appropriate and transparent arrangements are in place in the immediate aftermath of deaths in custody within Scottish prisons, including deaths of prisoners whilst in NHS care.

It was later announced that Professor Nancy Loucks OBE, Chief Executive of Families Outside, and Judith Robertson, Chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission, would join Wendy Sinclair Gieben as Co-Chairs of the review.

Families Outside is providing external expertise to inform the views of support for families and the Commission is conducting a comprehensive analysis of the relevant human rights legal standards, at both the European and international levels.

The outcome of the review will be reported in next year's annual report.

Control and restraint

Following an FAI in 2019, recommendations were made that led to the SPS undertaking a comprehensive review of one of their key operating protocols around use of force. The Cabinet Secretary for Justice asked HMIPS to undertake an assurance on their work. This will publish when the SPS Use of Force review is complete.

Segregation review

The CPT 2018 and 2019 reports identified prisoner segregation as a matter of ongoing concern. HMIPS worked with an intern from Edinburgh University to scope a thematic review of segregation in Scottish Prisons.

Progression review

HMIPS have seconded a senior manager from SPS to take on the role of thematic lead for Progression. This work was scoped and will be initiated in October 2021.

6. INDEPENDENT PRISON MONITORING ADVISORY GROUP (IPMAG)



Dr Alan Mitchell, Chair, Commissioner, SHRC and UK member of the CPT

Jim McManus, Deputy Chair and former UK member of the CPT

Pete White, founder and Chief Executive of Positive Prisons, Positive Futures

Marilyn Stenhouse, IPM at HMP YOI Cornton Vale

Fiona Govan, IPM at HMP Greenock

Hugh McGloin, IPM at HMP Low Moss

Muriel Mowat, IPM at HMP YOI Polmont

Katherine Mackie, retired Sheriff and Advisor to Community Justice Scotland Board

Gil Long, IPM at HMP Barlinnie (joined February 2021)

Sarah Cox, IPM at HMP Perth (joined February 2021)

Tina Harris, IPM at HMPs Grampian and Inverness (joined February 2021)

Margaret Roberts, IPM at HMPs Kilmarnock and Greenock (joined February 2021)

Mark Hamid, IPM at HMP Edinburgh (joined February 2021)

In addition, HMCIPS is a member of the IPMAG, along with the Deputy Chief Inspector of Prisons and the HMIPS PMCs. A representative from the Scottish Government's Justice Directorate is also invited to each meeting as an observer.

Due to the continually changing landscape within prisons due to COVID-19-related restrictions, the IPMAG agreed to meet around every two months rather than quarterly during 2020-21 (five meetings in total). Meetings were held 'online'. Discussions focused primarily on COVID-19-related issues, and included:

- The SPS ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges presented in having to implement lockdown restrictions, physical distancing, etc., including
- Early release of prisoners to reduce the prison population

- Reduced staffing levels and the move to a shorter 'core day'

- Prisoners' access to their fundamental rights including time in fresh air/exercise and purposeful activity

- Prisoners' access to family contact while in-person visits were suspended (including implementation of and access to virtual visits, mobile telephones and in-cell telephones)

- Development and implementation of a 'Remote Monitoring Framework' whereby IPMs were able to monitor prisons remotely safely, and the subsequent return to safe on-site monitoring

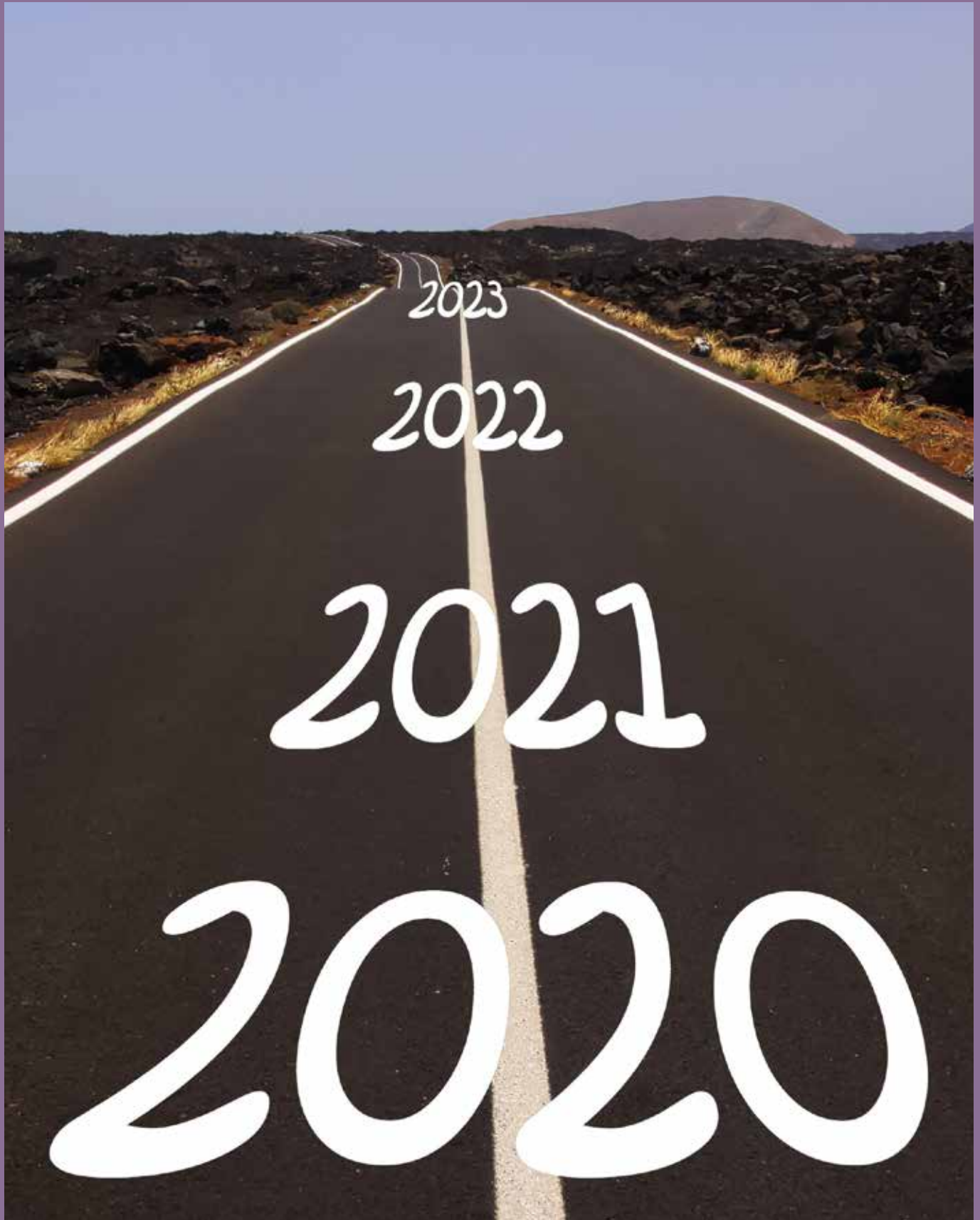
- Reduced IPM numbers due to the pandemic and recruitment/training of new IPMs

- Production of guidance for IPMs to monitor equality and diversity issues

Dr Alan Mitchell stood down as chair in April 2021, having chaired the Group since its inception in 2015. HMIPS are most grateful for his valuable contribution as chair, particularly his expertise and active interest in the standards relating to health and wellbeing, as well as his astute steering of important discussions. HMIPS wish him well in his new role as President of the (CPT). Professor Jim McManus acted as interim chair until the appointment of Kathryn Mackie as the new chair. HMIPS welcomes her to the new role.

Kerry Brooks, Anne Hawkins and Dan Gunn all resigned from the IPMAG and HMIPS would like to thank them for their significant contributions to the IPMAG and the success of the IPM initiative over their years of tenure.

7. HMIPS PRIORITIES FOR 2021-22



Inspection and monitoring

Adjusting our approach to monitoring and inspection in response to the COVID-19 pandemic allowed HMIPS to continue to provide scrutiny and focus on the key human rights issues contained in our Standards for Inspecting and Monitoring Prisons in Scotland.

The adapted methodology in the COVID-19 pandemic approach for both inspection and monitoring had some significant benefits, and elements of this have been captured and will be incorporated into both our new strategic plan for 2022-25 and the standards review that is underway. Full inspections will be resumed in autumn 2021 with HMP Kilmarnock, HMP Low Moss and HMP Shotts planned.

An alternative approach to CCU inspections will be developed to allow a greater number of inspections per annum. To complement the new approaches, HMIPS are developing guest inspector training manuals and hope to publish these in 2022.

Health and wellbeing in prisons

Healthcare will continue to be a priority area for HMIPS, as we seek to encourage consistency of service provision to all prisoners in Scotland. We look to the large number of bodies invested in healthcare to resolve some of the enduring and pressing concerns with recruitment and retention of clinical staff, particularly mental health staff, electronic prescribing and shared ICT platforms, substance misuse and the impact of dispensing on the regime. We will also review the access to healthcare and introduction of Buvidal, which anecdotally is very well received. The 2017 report on healthcare in prisons deserves review and we will be approaching the Cabinet Secretary for Health on this issue. HMIPS is committed to developing a pre-inspection survey on health and wellbeing that will be bespoke for vulnerable cohorts. Work is underway to pilot the survey in HMP YOI Polmont.

Overcrowding and population management

Population management and progression, as in previous years, and the rising prison population, remain our key concerns, as it has the potential to impact adversely and intensify pressures in almost every aspect of prison life for both prisoners and staff. We will focus on the impact and efforts to tackle the rising prison population in all our inspection and monitoring activities during 2021-22. This will become acute as COVID-19 recedes, court activity resumes, and the impact of COP26 is felt. The level of remand is extraordinarily high, and we will expect to see strategies reducing the number on remand.


Purposeful and rehabilitative activity

We have been consistently concerned by the apparent paucity in purposeful activity particularly for remand prisoners. This has been impacted even further by COVID-19, causing increased social isolation not dissimilar to solitary confinement. Addressing criminogenic need and providing rehabilitation is a core activity for prisons, and during the pandemic was extremely limited. We will be monitoring the resumption of activity and strategies to improve access.

Progression

HMIPS have gathered sufficient evidence, through inspection, monitoring and LVs, to suggest that the effectiveness of the policy needs to be tested, evidenced and evaluated. In collaboration with other strategic stakeholders, the HMIPS thematic review into progression will undertake a detailed examination of operational practice effectiveness as well as the strategic leadership and partnership arrangements.

The provision of throughcare support services to people before and immediately after their liberation from prison remains essential to their successful reintegration back into the community. These responsibilities lie not just with the SPS, but also with wider service providers such as education, housing, health, employment, social services and welfare benefits.

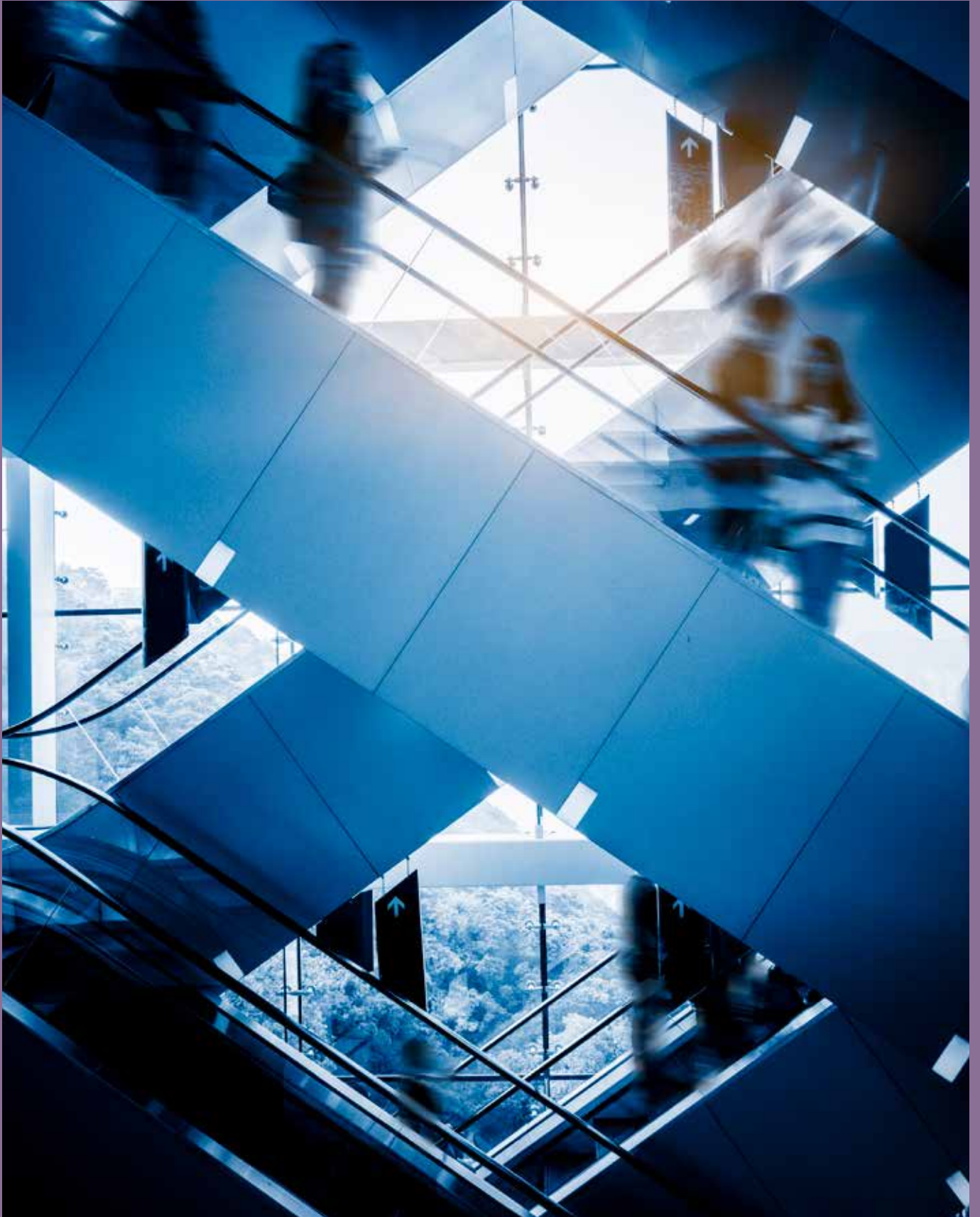


Fundamentally, these are dependent not so much on the criminal justice system, but on wider social justice issues of poverty, inequality, exclusion and marginalisation. TSOs made a huge contribution and HMIPS were disappointed when this scheme was suspended. We welcome alternative arrangements with the third sector and the potential for personal officers to undertake this role and will ask our IPMs to continue to monitor.

HMIPS have a number of thematic reviews and short reports we hope to progress in the next reporting year.

- The Death in Custody review that will publish in autumn 2021.
- An SRU review that has been initiated and will complete by April 2022.
- Ongoing assurance with the revised Use of Force within SPS including the preparation for alternatives for children.
- Complete with Education Scotland, the Education in Prison review.
- Propose to the Cabinet Secretary for Health a review of the 2017 Health in Prisons report.
- Propose to the SHRC a review of human rights compliance within prisons and CCUs.

8. 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 (SPS secondee)

Christopher Johnston, Prison Monitoring Co-ordinator, Region 1

Chris Collins, Prison Monitoring Co-ordinator, Region 2

Kerry Brooks, Prison Monitoring Co-ordinator, Region 3 (on secondment from June 2020 and resigned in 2021)

Ewan Mackenzie, Prison Monitoring Co-ordinator, Region 4

Sally-Anne Mercer, Death in Custody Review Lead, from February 2021

Kerry Love, Business Manager

Graeme Neill, Operations Manager

Ewan Patterson, Researcher/NPM Co-ordinator

Dorothy Halliday, Personal Assistant

Alexandra Costello, Prison Monitoring Support Officer

Shea Murray, Administrative Assistant (on maternity leave from February 2021)

In the next reporting period, we will be welcoming Tom McMurchie on secondment from the SPS, Deborah Russo as our intern, Liz Ravalde as our Social Researcher, and Sam Gluckstein as our Scottish NPM Coordinator.

Finances

Costs for the year were as follows

	(£)
Staff Costs*	841,207
Travel and Subsistence Costs	21,805
Printing and Binding	14,018
Hospitality	75
Conference Fees	0
Other running costs	70,203
Total	947,308

* No employees earned in excess of £150,000

9. ANNEXES



Annex A

Annual Independent Prison Monitoring Summary Reports

KEY:

● REGION 1

1. INVERNESS
2. GRAMPIAN
3. CASTLE HUNTLY
4. PERTH

● REGION 2

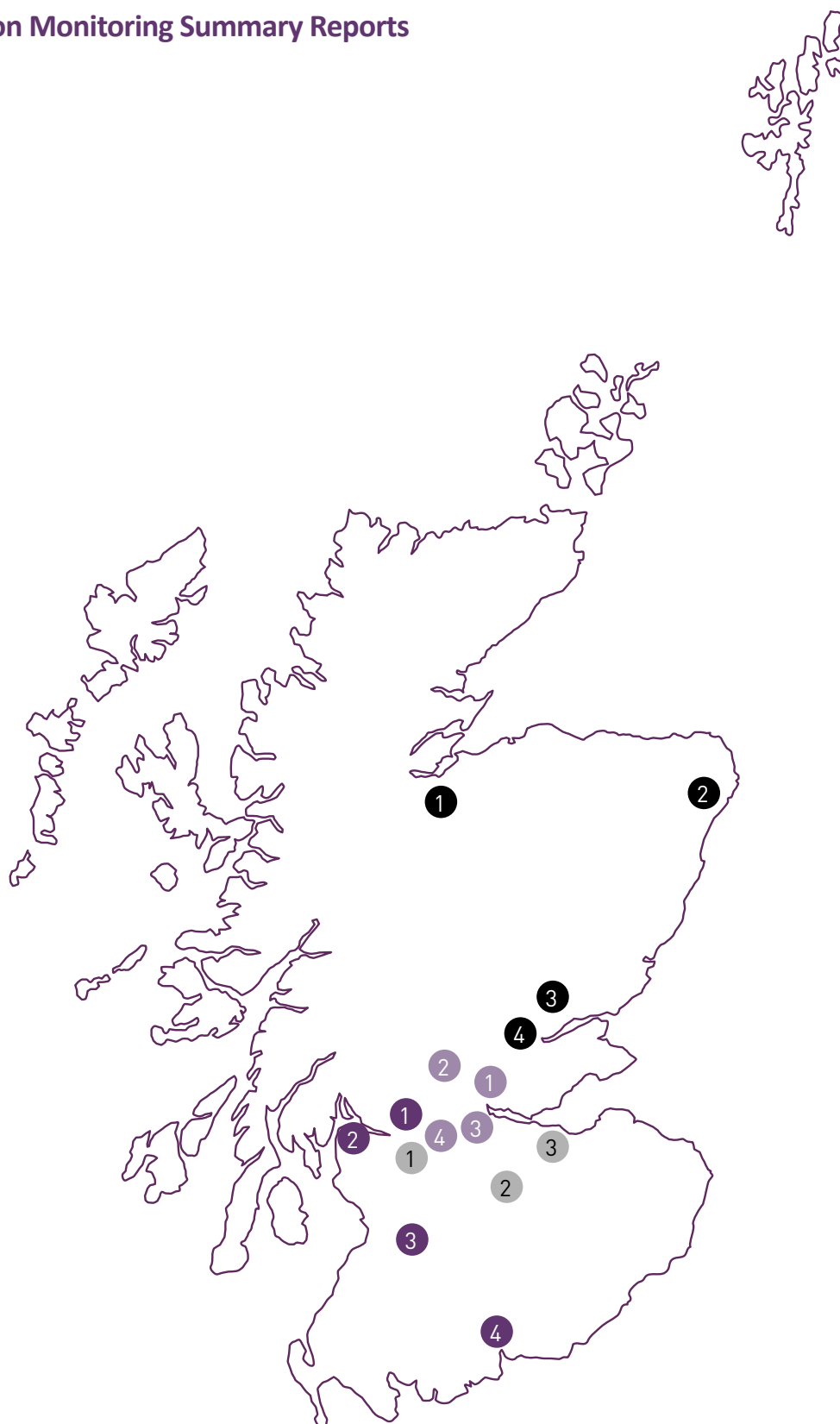
1. GLENOCHIL
2. CORNTON VALE
3. POLMONT
4. SHOTTS

● REGION 3

1. LOW MOSS
2. GREENOCK
3. KILMARNOCK
4. DUMFRIES

● REGION 4

1. BARLINNIE
2. ADDIEWELL
3. EDINBURGH





HMP ADDIEWELL

9 Station Road
Addiewell
West Lothian
EH55 8QF

HMP ADDIEWELL

Total calls and visits – 91

Requests handled – 33

IPM findings

COVID-19: The COVID-19 outbreak dominated this reporting year, and there was a mixed picture at Addiewell. They were hit very hard by an outbreak at the start of 2021, which significantly impacted on the regime at the prison and an emergency regime had to be implemented. Notwithstanding the outbreaks, and the significant detrimental impact they had on staff and prisoners, in the main the prison managed the situation reasonably well. Prisoners generally reported an understanding of the situation. During the severe outbreak, the primary concern raised by prisoners was a lack of communication from the prison management.

Purposeful activity and time out of cell: For significant periods of the year, prisoners reported that the regime had improved from before COVID-19. Generally, time out of cell was more structured. The IPM team remain concerned about the low number of prisoners attending courses, and the number of free spaces in some classrooms. The IPM team were pleased to see the plans to improve the activity offering for prisoners and look forward to this being reflected in the uptake.

Progression: At Addiewell, as at most prisons, the IPM team concerned by apparent delays to progression. Whilst some of this was caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, many of the concerns pre-date this.


Food: Following improvements in the previous year, the IPM team were once again concerned by the number of prisoners reporting they were not satisfied with the food on offer. There were basic breakdowns in the maintenance of the hall serveries and temperature checks were not always routinely carried out. Prisoners and staff involved in serving of the meals were not always properly trained to understand their duties. Breakdowns in the supply of cleaning products were frequently reported.

Changes and improvements

Personal officer scheme and insiders: The IPM team welcomed the introduction of the personal officer scheme during the year. Whilst the Scheme is in its infancy, the team recognised it as positive development which should improve staff and prisoner relationships, and ensure that many of the minor issues that have previously dominated the IPM teams time, can be resolved without IPM involvement.

Staff and prisoner relationships were generally more positive than in previous years.

The IPM team further welcomed the 'insiders' and the improvements made at Reception. Prisoners reported better experiences during the reception process.



Staffing: Staffing levels have been highlighted as an area of concern by the IPM team for the last two years. The IPM Team welcomed the recruitment of new staff that occurred throughout the year. The focus for the prison should now be on the retention and training of all staff.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Monitoring: The IPM team at HMP Addiewell, HMP Edinburgh and HMP Polmont are involved in a pilot to look at how to most effectively carry out the function of an IPM. This will involve targeted monitoring in a number of areas across the prison over the course of the next year. This will include a focus on the staff prisoner relationships, the personal officer scheme, early days in custody and purposeful activity.



HMP BARLINNIE

81 Lee Avenue
Riddrie
G33 2QX

HMP BARLINNIE

Total calls and visits – 105

Requests handled – 52

IPM findings

Poor-quality buildings: As in previous years, the IPM team continued to have serious concerns about the fabric of the buildings. The prison is not fit-for-purpose. No prisoner should be housed in these conditions in 2021. The IPM team previously welcomed the announcement of funding to refurbish the reception area, but this remains a sticking plaster on a gaping wound.

Overcrowding: The population of the prison remained far too high, with associated challenges for prisoners, staff and management. The IPMs believe the population must be reduced drastically to ensure no prisoners are required to share a cell, and the population must be maintained at this level if Barlinnie is to offer the service to the prisoners and the wider community that it should.


Adapted cells: The IPM Team remain concerned about the lack of adapted cells for prisoners who require them. Due to overcrowding at Barlinnie, too many prisoners are in cells that are unsuitable for their needs. The SPS and the Scottish Government should take urgent action to rectify these problems.

COVID-19 and time out of cell: Generally, the prison have managed the COVID-19 pandemic well. However, this has, as in most prisons, come at the cost of prisoners' time out of cell. However, this has been raised by the IPM team in previous years. Too many prisoners are spending too long in their cells. The IPM team were particularly concerned about the curtailment of exercise during some outbreaks of COVID-19, meaning some prisoners spent extended periods of their time locked in their cells. In conversations with the IPM team many prisoners reported that it is not unusual to spend 23 hours or more each day in their cell.

Progression: At Barlinnie, as at most prisons, the IPM team were concerned by apparent delays to progression. This was of particular concern for those prisoners in Letham Hall. Whilst some of this was caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, many of the concerns pre-date this.

Changes and improvements

Gym provision: Despite concerns about time out of cell, during the year some really good work took place at Barlinnie. The gym provision provided for prisoners throughout the year was excellent, with staff making efforts to put on activities whenever they were able and ensure these were offered equitably.



The library and resource hub: The IPM team were very pleased to see the development of a community library and resource hub. This allowed some key services to interact with prisoners during recreation periods, which not only makes it more likely that prisoners will engage with some services, but also ensures that recreation is meaningful. The IPM team would like to see this sort of initiative extended so prisoners can access it more often.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Time out of cell: The opportunities for prisoners to get meaningful and significant time out of cell will continue to be a primary focus of the IPM team.

Population management: The impact of overcrowding on prisoners and staff alike will be monitored by IPMs.



HMP OPEN ESTATE

Longforgan
near Dundee
DD2 5HL

HMP CASTLE HUNTLY

Total calls and visits – 47

Requests handled – 9

IPM findings

Purposeful activity: Prisoners, as always, had plenty of time in the fresh air and out of cell. Gyms had to close in line with the Scottish Government's restrictions, but outdoor PT sessions were being provided throughout the day. A range of in-cell activities were also made available.

All work parties within the prison continued, but there were no external work placements happening, with the exception of a small party working in the local community, tidying up a piece of wasteland near the prison. This was well received by the local community.

COVID-19: IPMs confirmed that the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines had run smoothly to date, following the same prioritisation categories used in the community, and ensuring prisoners' privacy.

Cancellation of home leaves: Prisoners had concerns that, because of lockdown, the lack of community access including home leaves may go against them in parole board hearings. Prisoners did however confirm to IPMs that staff stated the reason for these decisions very clearly, and that they understood the prison had to follow Scottish Government COVID-19 guidance. Prisoners confirmed also that staff were continuing to work with them to do what they could by way of preparation for parole board hearings. IPMs acknowledged that this was a concern outwith the influence of the prison staff.

Changes and improvements

Regime: IPMs welcomed the move during the third quarter of the year to extend the regime from a 'core day' to a 07:00-19:00 regime, different from other prisons. This allowed for those returning from external work placements to benefit from the gym, socialising, and other beneficial activities, rather than being locked in their cell right away.

Employability: An Employability Board was set up, with the aim of better matching work and education opportunities with prisoners' existing skills and experience. This was welcomed by IPMs.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Over the course of 2021-22, IPMs will monitor the changes to the regime as the prison moves out of COVID-19 restrictions; how these changes affect daily life at the prison, including access to work, programmes and progression.



HMP YOI CORNTON VALE

Cornton Road
Stirling
FK9 5NU

HMP YOI CORNTON VALE

Total calls and visits – 62

Requests handled – 5

IPM findings

Prisoner engagement: The women continued to report having very good relations with staff. During observations by the IPM team, staff were knowledgeable about all the prisoners in their care, and were engaging well, with ongoing conversations and support.

The IPM team were impressed with the efforts of the prison to listen to prisoners, with the regular surveys and action taken in response to them.

Transport: The IPMs continued to have concerns about transport from court, the delays women sometimes face and the sharing of transport with male prisoners. The number of journeys that were not direct from court to prison was a matter of frustration. It remains unacceptable that transport from court is shared with men. The IPM team are clear this must be reviewed in future contracts.

The new establishment: Building work continued to construct the new national facility for women on the current site at Cornton Vale. The IPM team were pleased to hear about plans for the regime in the new facility, and that it will more accurately reflect the needs of the prisoners; for example, meals being served at appropriate times of the day.

Changes and Improvements

Food: The women at Cornton Vale reported throughout the year that the food on offer was the best in the prison estate. Menu choices were varied and the food appears to be fresh and nutritious.

Separation and reintegration: During the year there was a concerted effort to reduce the use of the SRU, which was welcomed by the IPM team. The care offered to the women in Dumyat was generally to be commended. Of some concern was the need for other prisons holding female prisoners (Edinburgh and Polmont) to transfer prisoner to Cornton Vale should they need to be separated. The IPM team do not believe this is in the best interests of the prisoners and would like to see this practice cease.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Women's strategy and the new facility: The IPM team will continue to have a close interest in the development of the new facility.

Transport: The concerns have been escalated and the IPM Team will continue to look for improvements or act on failings.



HMP DUMFRIES

Terregles Street
Dumfries
DG2 9AX

HMP DUMFRIES

Total calls and visits – 53

Requests handled – 26

IPM findings

Coronavirus: HMP Dumfries were affected by a significant coronavirus outbreak this year and time out of cell and access to regime was restricted as a result. IPMs noted the excellent efforts from all staff and prisoners to maintain a functioning prison during this period.

Purposeful activity: The gym has been reconfigured to allow for social distancing. IPMs welcomed efforts to increase the level of education provision at various times during the year and noted the life skills classes on offer to short-term prisoners.

Organisational effectiveness: IPMs were informed that COVID has shaped management practices significantly throughout the year but that the levels of adaptability and staff willingness had enabled the establishment to function as effectively as possible (see further info below).

Healthcare: A small number of prisoners expressed concern regarding the impact on prisoners' mental health due to COVID restrictions. IPMs met with the NHS who confirmed that the mental health service waiting list is up-to-date and that all urgent requests are seen within 24 hours.

Decency: On all visits this year the prison was in an excellent state of cleanliness, and food was reported to be of a good standard.

Changes and Improvements

Staff-prisoner relationships/organisational effectiveness: IPMs recognise the positive staff culture and the excellent compliance of prisoners during the coronavirus outbreak that ensured the prison continued to function safely. During periods of lockdown, the nature of work within the prison changed significantly with officers taking on tasks routinely worked by prisoners. IPMs commend the flexibility and willingness of all staff and prisoner to come through this period while endeavouring to limit transmission of infections in partnership with Public Health Scotland.

Purposeful activity: The completion of the therapeutic shed in the gardens, led by prisoners at HMP Dumfries, was a welcome innovation in the establishment

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Short-term and remand: IPMs will continue to monitor access to regime, programmes and courses for short-term and remand prisoners at HMP Dumfries. IPMs are also interested in HMP Dumfries's ongoing work with community agencies to impact on reoffending.



HMP EDINBURGH

3 Stenhouse Road
Edinburgh
EH11 3LN

HMP EDINBURGH

Total calls and visits – 79

Requests handled – 52

IPM findings

COVID: COVID has dominated the year at all prisons. Overall, the situation at Edinburgh was extremely well managed. The IPM team were impressed with the way changes were implemented and communicated with prisoners. The regime put in place for most of the year allowed for a balance between minimising risk of transmission, but also allowing all prisoners a reasonable amount of time out of their cells, and a predictable routine.

Staff-prisoner relationships: Staff and prisoner relationships continued to generally be noted as extremely positive across the halls. IPM teams have generally found staff helpful and responsive, with good knowledge of prisoners in their care.

Progression: Once again, and in common with many other prisons, concerns about prisoners' progression remained a consistent cause for concern throughout the year. Whilst COVID-19 had exacerbated some of the delays, in truth many of the issues across the prison estate were pre-existing.

Food: The IPM team had mixed feedback from prisoners about the food provision. The IPM team observed food focus groups and were impressed with the running of these, and the serious consideration given to the prisoners' suggestions and the detailed explanations provided where change was not possible. Some prisoners on the halls, especially longer-term-offence protection prisoners, did not feel their voices were being heard.

Changes and improvements

Hallway improvement: The physical improvements to the hallway to Ratho were extended to Ingliston and Hermiston. This remains a small but significant improvement in the environment.

Radio: The IPM team were impressed with the work of the Radio Team in providing information to the prison and are keen to see how this continues to develop.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Monitoring: The IPM team at HMP Addiewell, HMP Edinburgh and HMP Polmont are involved in a pilot to look at how to most effectively carry out the function of an IPM. This will involve targeted monitoring in a number of areas across the prison over the course of the next year.

Purposeful activity: Prior to COVID-19 the IPM team had raised concerns that the workshops were under utilised, and it will be key for the prison to continue to address this issue as it moves out of the pandemic handling.



HMP GLENOCHIL
King O'Muir Road
Tuillibody
Clackmannanshire
FK10 3AD

HMP GLENOCHIL

Total calls and visits – 50

Requests handled – 19

IPM findings

COVID-19: During the lockdown restrictions prison staff worked hard to provide as much of a meaningful regime to prisoners as was practicable, albeit on a smaller scale to avoid large groups. As the Scottish Government eased or tightened restrictions, prison staff amended the management of prisoners accordingly.

All prisoners had access to a daily shower, time in the fresh air and exercise.

To reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, prisoners were arranged into small-group bubbles. Each bubble accessed elements of the regime as if they were a 'household', and were not permitted to mix with other bubbles, in keeping with the rules for households in the community. The need to manage prisoners in this way was well communicated and prisoners understood the rationale.

Access to work: The management of prisoners in 'bubbles' meant that the number of prisoners accessing each element of the regime was restricted. Only essential work parties were permitted to operate, meaning not all prisoners could access work. However, IPMs ascertained that allocation of the limited number of workplaces was done fairly. Both prisoners and staff worked well to apply relevant COVID-19 safety measures during work.

Prisoners with additional needs: With the prison being managed under restrictions, IPMs were particularly keen to monitor the quality of life of prisoners with additional support needs, particularly the significant number of elderly prisoners. IPMs concluded that they were being managed appropriately, including assistance in moving from their hall to other parts of the prison e.g., accessing lunch and socialising in their hall. Prisoners who required around-the-clock care received this service from external care providers, who were available as and when required.

Changes and improvements

Regime: As was the case in all prisons, with the staffing complement reduced (for example, where staff were shielding) and restrictions in place, the regime was changed to a shorter 'core day'. IPMs acknowledged the need for this change.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Over the course of 2021-22, IPMs will monitor the changes to the regime as the prison moves out of COVID-19 restrictions, and how these changes affect daily life at the prison. Including access to work, programmes and progression.



HMP YOI GRAMPIAN

South Road
Peterhead
AB42 2YY

HMP GRAMPIAN

Total calls and visits – 60

Requests handled – 46

IPM findings

Decency and time out of cell: IPMs spoke with a number of prisoners and determined that they were receiving their entitlements with regards to time out of cell. This included time for outdoor exercise and time in the fresh air. Prisoners who were isolating also received these entitlements, safely, and away from non-isolating prisoners. Prisoners also received daily access to showers.

Healthcare: Healthcare were short of staff during the reporting period. This impacted upon capacity to deliver some clinics. Prisoners expressed concerns regarding delays in receiving medication. NHS staff acknowledged the issues and informed IPMs that they were working with community partners to address the issues.

COVID-19 vaccine: Roll-out was delivered successfully, equivalent to the roll-out in the community.

Regime: IPMs were pleased to see the closing down/opening up of work parties, education, programmes, etc., in response to the Scottish Government's implementation/easing of lockdown restrictions. While prisoners were inevitably affected (e.g., limited numbers able to access the above at any one time), it demonstrated the prison had taken steps to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading, while aiming to provide as much of a regime as possible for prisoners.

Separation and Reintegration Unit: IPMs spoke with prisoners being held in the SRU. They reported they were being well looked after and that their needs were being met, including access to virtual visits. Staff also reported that there were no issues within the unit.

Changes and improvements

Staffing: The staffing complement was sustainably increased by comparison to previous years, with a reduction in the need for 'detached-duty staff'. This provides a more stable basis with which to deliver improvements.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Over the course of 2021-22, IPMs will monitor the changes to the regime as the prison moves out of COVID-19 restrictions; how these changes affect daily life at the prison, including access to work, programmes and progression.



HMP GREENOCK

Old Inverkip Road
Greenock
PA16 9AJ

HMP GREENOCK

Total calls and visits – 51

Requests handled – 28

IPM findings

Decency: Prisoners received daily showers, time in the fresh air and exercise, which IPMs welcomed. Virtual visits and in-cell telephony were fully implemented in HMP Greenock.

Coronavirus: Management, staff and prisoners handled the pandemic extremely well, with a coronavirus team in full PPE, managing a very small amount of suspected cases. Cases were extremely limited due to the excellent communications and adherence by staff and prisoners to guidelines throughout the year.

Regime: Essential work parties functioned throughout the year and the regime gradually opened up for smaller groups of prisoners as restrictions eased. IPMs noted that this changing guidelines were closely monitored by prison management and changes implemented accordingly.

Healthcare: IPMs spent some time looking at mental health and wellbeing provision and concluded there was comprehensive system of provision in place to assist prisoners.

Progression: There were increasing frustrations regarding backlogs in progression cases, especially for prisoners who had applied for FGTR, these concerns were escalated to SPS HQ.

Changes and improvements

Life skills: Monitors welcomed the new life skills area in the prison and the continued emphasis on providing additional time out of cell in a safe manner during the pandemic.

Prisoner requests: IPMs continued to take a reasonable number of requests from prisoners throughout the year and were pleased to note these were handled efficiently by staff to facilitate resolutions.

Staff-prisoner relationships: Overwhelmingly the relationships between prisoners and staff was noted to be positive with excellent compliance with restrictions throughout the year.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Progression: IPMs will continue to liaise with SPS HQ and HMP Greenock regarding FGTR applications and monitor all aspects of progression.



HMP INVERNESS

Duffy Drive
Inverness
IV2 3HH

HMP INVERNESS

Total calls and visits – 54

Requests handled – 6

IPM findings

COVID-19: IPMs were concerned to note two COVID-19 outbreaks during the reporting period. Significant numbers of prisoners were required to be managed under isolation conditions, and a large proportion of staff was unable to work.

IPMs confirmed that the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines had run smoothly to date, following the same prioritisation categories used in the community, and ensuring prisoners' privacy.

Regime: The regime was reduced to essential work parties only in response to tightening Scottish Government rules, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Similarly, education was closed. However, prisoners could access in-cell education packs on a range of topics. Elements of the regime were later opened up in accordance with Scottish Government's restrictions being eased.

Decency and time out of cell: IPMs spoke with a number of prisoners and determined that, in general, prisoners received their entitlements with regards to time out of cell. This included time for outdoor PT and time in the fresh air. Prisoners who were isolating also received these entitlements, safely, and away from non-isolating prisoners.

Prisoners with additional needs: IPMs concluded that the needs of prisoners with disabilities were being catered for, including the cleanliness of cells, bedding etc., provision of social care services, and being offered time in the fresh air. Disabled cells showed evidence of modifications. Similarly, the health and social care needs of elderly and infirm prisoners were observed to be met.

Family contact: During the reporting period, IPMs learned that prisoners were entitled to two physical and two virtual visits per month, roughly one per week. The prison did, however, enable prisoners to access more where there were free slots on the timetable, which was welcomed by IPMs.

Changes and improvements

Regime: As was the case in all prisons, with the staffing complement reduced (for example, where staff were shielding) and restrictions in place, the regime was changed to a shorter 'core day'. IPMs acknowledged the need for this change.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Over the course of 2021-22, IPMs will monitor the changes to the regime as the prison moves out of COVID-19 restrictions. How these changes affect daily life at the prison, including access to work, programmes and progression.



HMP KILMARNOCK

Mauchline Road
Kilmarnock
KA1 5AA

HMP KILMARNOCK

Total calls and visits – 58

Requests handled – 48

IPM findings

Decency: Prisoners have received daily showers, time in fresh air and exercise throughout the year with some disruption during periods of lockdown. All faith services have been running in some form throughout the year. In-cell telephony was swiftly and fully implemented.

Coronavirus: There was a significant outbreak of positive coronavirus cases throughout the month of February which resulted in lockdown, prisoners in isolation and associated staffing challenges. Management worked with Public Health Scotland to manage this as efficiently as possible. Movements in the prison were extremely restricted to reduce risk of transmission.

Purposeful activity: Worksheds were partially open to household bubbles and all essential work parties continued to function. In cell activities and provision of wellbeing packs were distributed during periods of lockdown.

Healthcare remains a high priority for prisoners and IPMs have received requests around access to GP, medications and mental health provision.

Illicit substances: Prevalence of drugs continued to be an issue in the establishment this year and while IPMs welcome all security measures to increase finds and guard against drug use within the prison, this remained a concern for management, particularly the changes in behaviour associated with use of psychoactive substances.

Prison management have successfully taken robust measures to minimise use of substances and occasionally this has led to some prisoner frustration over handling of mail, and the prison continues to communicate processes.

Changes and improvements

Regime/purposeful activity: IPMs were pleased to note many aspects of the normal regime remained intact at various times during the year while observing COVID precautions, including physically distanced, communal prayer being introduced.

Health and wellbeing: A wellbeing pack was developed and circulated to all prisoners and new admissions, covering coping with change and anxiety relief strategies.

Illicit substances: Detection and prevention of illicit substances in the prison was greatly improved in the year.

Progressions: Prison management demonstrated a clear focus on case management and programme delivery processes. RMTs continued to run frequently throughout the year to ensure prisoners are progression-ready.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Healthcare/SRU: IPMs will continue to monitor access to healthcare in HMP Kilmarnock and conditions in use of Separation and Reintegration within the establishment.



HMP LOW MOSS

Crosshill
Bishopbriggs
Glasgow
G64 2PZ

HMP LOW MOSS

Total calls and visits – 55

Requests handled – 42

IPM findings

Decency: Virtual visits and in-cell telephony were fully implemented and all prisoners retained their access to in-cell showers. Transmission of coronavirus was very well managed throughout the year with limited cases. The roll-out of the vaccine was co-ordinated and delivered successfully. IPMs commented on high standards of cleanliness and hygiene in the establishment.

Population: The population at HMP Low Moss remained relatively high during the year with associated pressures. Providing additional time out of cell was a challenge for all population groups during periods of lockdown. Time out of cell increased as restrictions lifted throughout the year.

Pre-liberation support: COVID-19 restrictions may have adversely affected preparations for release. However, IPMs welcomed measures put in place to mitigate the loss of provision, including work with external agencies and links centre staff visiting residential areas.

Regime: Access to work, education and purposeful activity was seriously impacted by the pandemic for large parts of the year. IPMs raised some concerns about levels of meaningful engagement for prisoners. Staff advised IPMs of various methods deployed to mitigate this loss of provision throughout the year.

Illicit substances: Prevalence of drugs continued to be an issue in the establishment this year and while IPMs welcome all security measures to increase finds and guard against drug use within the prison, this remained a concern for management, particularly the changes in behaviour associated with use of psychoactive substances.

Changes and improvements

Purposeful activity: Time out of cell was increased where appropriate throughout the year and all essential work parties remained in operation. IPMs were pleased to note that access to chaplaincy services remained, albeit in slightly altered forms. Programmes recommenced in small groups as soon as it was safe to do so.

Decency: Food remains of a good standard within the establishment. IPMs visited the kitchen regularly and noted a high standard of work and organisation.

Separation and Reintegration Unit: The SRU was visited regularly this year and IPMs noted the professionalism of staff who regularly provided an overview of practices in Lomond Hall.



Key aspects for continued monitoring

Healthcare: IPMs will enquire about continued work of vaccination clinics within the establishment and prisoner access to various aspects of healthcare.

Purposeful Activity: Prisoner access to education, work and all other aspects of regime will remain a priority for IPMs as the regime continues to open up.



HMP PERTH

3 Edinburgh Road
Perth
PH2 8AT

HMP PERTH

Total calls and visits – 61

Requests Handled – 47

IPM findings

Decency standards: All prisoners had access to a daily shower, time in the fresh air and exercise. This included prisoners being held in Separation and Reintegration Units (SRUs).

COVID-19: To reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, access to work opportunities was reduced. With only essential work parties permitted to operate. As the Scottish Government eased/tightened restrictions, prison staff amended the management of prisoners accordingly by amending the number of prisoners in a work party.

Prisoner complaints: The Internal Complaints Committee process was observed, and IPMs concluded that staff treated the prisoners with dignity and respect. Prisoners clearly had access to the full complaints process. While there was no standardised national tariff, punishment awards were decided by senior managers and predicated on the individual cases and circumstances.

Family contact: Staff were required to reduce (and at times cease) access to family visits, in line with changing Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions. Staff ensured that prisoners had access to additional virtual visits to make up for the lack of access to physical visits. However, there was some concern that some prisoner groups were not offered as many visit time options as others.

Substance misuse: IPMs were informed by staff that cases of substance misuse had increased as lockdown restrictions eased. It was confirmed that such cases continued to be managed under the SPS MORS policy, though the increase in cases remained a concern.

Healthcare: IPMs were concerned at the length of time prisoners had to wait to see a doctor. Waiting times had been affected by the pandemic and associated lockdown restrictions.

A lot of prisoners sought to discuss healthcare problems with IPMs. IPMs recommended prisoners make use of the NHS complaints system and saw evidence of prisoners following this advice. IPMs welcomed the fact that prisoners were able to access the NHS complaints system.

Changes and improvements

In-cell activities: They have been improved. Prisoners across the establishment were granted access to Sky TV and were allowed X-Boxes.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Over the course of 2021-22, IPMs will monitor the changes to the regime as the prison moves out of COVID-19 restrictions, and how these changes affect daily life at the prison, including access to work, programmes and progression.



HMP YOI POLMONT

Brightons
Falkirk
FK2 0AB

HMP YOI POLMONT

Total calls and visits – 75

Requests handled – 19

IPM findings

COVID and time out of cell: The IPM team were concerned about time out of cell previously. This has been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the regime that has been put in place. Conversations with prisoners continued to show that too many were spending far too long in their cells each day. There were inconsistent accounts on the time out of cell being offered. During the year several prisoners reported that exercise was not always offered.

Purposeful activity: Prisoners who were able to attend classes were engaged and enjoying them. The IPM team were pleased that despite less activity running due to COVID-19, the number of hours being offered was similar to pre-lockdown levels. The prison worked creatively during COVID-19 to create opportunities. However, some prisoners did not feel they could access courses they had been told about and were not sure how they would do this.

Food: There were mixed reports about the food on offer during the year. Initially the female prisoners in particular were very concerned about the food being offered. Focus groups were held and the women are now employed in the kitchen, which led to much more positive feedback towards the end of the year.

Changes and improvements

Prisoner participation: The food focus groups were positive, but IPMs are concerned that prisoners are not involved in decision-making within the prison more widely. Prisoners often reported that there were no mechanisms for them to have their say. The plans for the reintroduction of the prisoner committees are incredibly positive. The IPM team look forward to seeing these develop over the coming year.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Monitoring: The IPM team at HMP Addiewell, HMP Edinburgh and HMP Polmont are involved in a pilot to look at how to most effectively carry out the function of an IPM. This will involve targeted monitoring in a number of areas across the prison over the course of the next year, including areas such as staff and prisoner relationships, prisoner participation and engagement, time out of cell, and purposeful activity.



HMP SHOTTS

Canthill
Shotts
ML7 4LE

HMP SHOTTS

Total calls and visits – 53

Requests handled – 37

IPM findings

Visits/family contact: Early in the year there were some prisoner frustrations at delays to the implementation of in-cell technology due to technical issues outside the control of prison management.

Regime: There was a very restricted regime initially, but all essential work parties were maintained. IPMs found excellent levels of time out of cell for prisoners at HMP Shotts throughout the year, with access to daily showers, time in fresh air and exercise.

Decency: Transmission of coronavirus was exceptionally well managed throughout the year with extremely limited cases. IPMs found staff to be welcoming and helpful with healthy and respectful relationships apparent in the establishment.

Illicit substances: Prevalence of drugs continued to be an issue in the establishment this year and while IPMs welcome all security measures to increase finds and guard against drug use within the prison, this remained a concern for management, particularly the changes in behaviour associated with use of psychoactive substances.

Changes and improvements

Regime: IPMs noted the gradual opening up and move towards a fuller regime as restrictions eased, including the restart of education provision and use of gymnasium.

Progression readiness: Prison management demonstrated a clear focus on case management and programme delivery processes. RMTs continued to run frequently throughout the year to ensure prisoners are progression ready.

Organisational effectiveness: IPMs welcomed the proposed kiosk system for improving the efficiency of the regime for prisoners and staff.

Virtual visits: The implementation of virtual visits was well managed and maintained throughout the year with ample opportunities for prisoners to use if they wished.

Key aspects for continued monitoring

Healthcare/SRU: IPMs will continue to monitor access to healthcare and healthcare resources in HMP Shotts, and the use of the Separation and Reintegration Unit within the establishment.

Regime: IPMs welcomed the attempts to restart various work parties in the latter part of the year in line with physical distancing protocol, and will continue to monitor access, availability and participation.

Annex B

2021-22 Planned Scrutiny

On present plans the following scrutiny will take place during 2021-22.

Full Prison Inspections:

HMP Kilmarnock	October 2021
HMP Low Moss	February 2022
HMP Shotts	May 2022

We will undertake at least one unannounced inspection and anticipate at least one follow-up visit post-inspection.

Prison Liaison Visits:

HMP Dumfries	April 2021
HMP Inverness	May 2021
HMP Addiewell	June 2021 (return visit with partners)
HMP Edinburgh	July 2021 (return visit with partners)

COP26:

We anticipate monitoring selected CCUs and prison receptions during COP26.

Court Custody Unit Full Inspections:

A revised approach to full inspections is being piloted and locations were still to be decided at the time of publishing.

Court Custody Unit Liaison Visits:

We will visit Sheriff Courts as they begin to reopen and also undertake unannounced visits to follow up on recommendations from previous visits.

Thematic reviews:

The Death in Custody will publish by December 2021

Thematic reviews that anticipate publication in 2022:

Progression review

Education review

SRU review

Prisoner Transport review

Use of Force assurance



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