



HMIPS
HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

NEWS RELEASE

LIAISON VISIT TO HMP ADDIEWELL ON 13 MAY 2020

This report is part of a programme of liaison visits of prisons to be carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS) during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency and was conducted under HMIPS' new, albeit temporary, [Liaison Visits Framework for Prisons and Court Custody Units published in April 2020](#). These liaison visit reports provide assurance to Ministers and the wider public that scrutiny of the treatment and conditions in which prisoners are held has been continued during the pandemic.

Prison management, and all staff working in the prison deserve huge credit for bringing the COVID-19 outbreak under control, reducing the number of positive cases from 14 down to one at the time of our inspection, and bringing a calm order to the prison after a clearly tense and difficult period.

In light of COVID-19, and the advice received from Health Protection Scotland (HPS), the prison was running an extremely limited regime. Although purposeful activity had been reduced dramatically, there were still opportunities to take part in distance learning, in-cell learning and obtain Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) in a number of subjects.

The arrival of in-cell telephony and video visit technology will radically improve participation in family life.

The establishment were responding well to the challenges of a changing landscape with regards to guidance and procedures, and in particular to the response to an outbreak of COVID-19 where they locked down a whole area under Rule 40a. The Director and his team have consistently communicated clearly with both staff and prisoners, which was confirmed by both groups during the visit.

In HMP Addiewell, the kiosks for the use of prisoners displayed all general information notices in 23 different languages; and induction booklets were supplied in relevant languages. However, inspectors could not find evidence of COVID-19 specific notices or signage being translated into other languages. HMIPS urges HMP Addiewell to look at translating the COVID-19 specific information into the most common languages.

There is a tension between the rights set out under article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the restrictions having to be imposed when following HPS guidelines. The prison appeared to be acting in a responsible way, always aiming to provide the maximum opportunities for access to phones and fresh air, etc, for those not in isolation while still respecting HPS guidelines. As with other prisons, however, inspectors were concerned that in having to follow the guidance of HPS, those isolated under Rule 41 were not getting any access to fresh air. This sits uncomfortably with human rights legislation.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, was appointed in July 2018.
2. On publication the report can be found at www.prisonsofscotland.gov.uk
3. For further information please contact Kerry Love, Business Manager, at Kerry.Love@gov.scot or on 07939 980452.