



# Independent Prison Monitoring (IPM) Findings Annual Report

**Prison:**

**HMP ADDIEWELL**

**Year (1 April – 31 March):**

**2024 – 2025**

By HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS SCOTLAND



## Annual Monitoring Figures

		2023-24	2024-25
	Total number of visits	70	82
	Total number of missed weeks	0	4
	Total number of prisoner requests received	341	255
	Total number of IPM hours	257	341

## Executive Summary

This annual report summarises the observations made and engagement with prisoners, staff, and management throughout the year, by Independent Prison Monitors (IPMs) against the nine HMIPS inspection and monitoring standards.

There was an average of 1.5 visits per week. The number of visits and IPM hours increased compared with 2023/24. The number of request for the year reduced overall, but remained higher than most other prisons. Requests dropped to an all time low of only seven new requests received in one month, but rose again over the winter period.

This has been a mixed year for HMP Addiewell and that is reflected in this IPM annual report. Following on from last year's report, things continued to move in a positive direction. The tragic deaths that occurred in November 2024 had a significant impact on the prison.

That said, the overall story and the headline for this report is positive. The prison remained in a better place than the lows of a few years ago. Many initiatives and practices have been embedded, for example the prisoner forums, which remain an exemplar of prisoner engagement across the prison estate. That is not to say that serious effort and commitment will not be needed by all the staff and management at Addiewell to maintain and improve, but the prison management team is aware of what is required and have in place the foundations to continue the journey.

Whilst the prison management team are responsible for some of the issues the IPM team feels need improvement, there were two major issues that lay outwith their control. The first was an issue across the prison estate regarding the complex and incompatible prisoner populations they are being asked to house. The SPS must review their population strategy as a matter of urgency.

The second relates to the regime Addiewell is being asked to run. The IPM team is clear this is not in the best interests of prisoners. Prisoners were left unlocked for extended periods on the halls, and the prison have not been provided the necessary levers to incentivise engagement with positive and meaningful activity for a cohort of prisoners. The Scottish Government, SPS and Sodexo must review the prison regime to ensure it is in the best interests of prisoners and helps provide a basis for rehabilitation and reintegration. The status quo of prisoners unlocked with nothing to occupy them cannot be allowed to persist.

# General Observations

## Standard 1: Lawful and Transparent Custody

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Once again, the Reception and Early Days in Custody Unit provided a positive introduction to the prison for new arrivals. IPMs attended induction sessions and observed reception processes on several occasions during the year. The staff and prisoners who delivered the induction should be commended for the positive environment they created. The prison should ensure that the Insiders' room in reception is always maintained to a decent standard, that the room is a welcoming space for new prisoners and encourage all prisoners to attend the full induction.

There were challenges for the prison in terms of the population they held, in particular the number of offence-protection prisoners, a concern raised in the previous annual report. There were ongoing difficulties in making sure all halls housed the prisoner population it was intended for, with offence-protection prisoners sometimes being held on halls with mainstream prisoners, and remand prisoners being housed alongside convicted. Within the convicted population, short and long-term prisoners had also been housed together. The IPM team repeats their call from last year that HMP Addiewell should not be asked to house multiple prisoner populations, and that the SPS should review its use of the prison estate to rationalise and simplify the prisoner populations in all prisons.

The IPM team welcomed the work done by Addiewell to ensure prisoners were aware of their rights to vote in the general election via the prisoner in cell kiosks. SPS prisons should seek to learn from Addiewell as they develop their in-cell technology offering.

## Standard 2: Decency

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For most of the reporting period, the improvements noted in the 2023-24 annual report around the decency standard were maintained. The reports from the IPM team were in the main positive, and the prison sustained high levels of cleanliness and food serveries areas were well-maintained. Rewarding the cleanest pantries had an impact. It will be important for the prison to renew this focus and energy in the coming year.

Prisoners reported that the facilities on offer were good. All cells have in-cell showers. There were some issues around ensuring all cells had working in-cell technology and making sure items such as kettles were always available. There were persistent examples of prisoners not having access to clean bedding and towels and there remained some issues around the control of cleaning equipment. On occasions, hall stores were missing items. The prison should review the system for providing these items and ensure all staff and management understand a consistent process, and that appropriate staff are empowered to resolve problems when they occur. The IPM team welcomed the Spring Clean conducted in March, and the prisons plans to repeat this process periodically to maintain levels of cleanliness.

Towards the end of the reporting period, prisoners began to raise concerns about the quality of food, but overall, the food offering was good. The IPM team was concerned there had been some slippage in the good work around the control and management of the hotplates. The prison may wish to investigate these issues further. As noted elsewhere in this report, the IPM team believes that the current regime exacerbates the issues of control at these critical parts of the prison day.

The IPM team was pleased that where issues were raised around the food offered within the social visits area these were responded to, and action was taken. Swift action was also taken to resolve issues that affected prisoners during Ramadan.

The issue of the cost of food from the canteen and via sundry purchases was raised throughout the year. As in the community, inflation has increased the cost of many items. However, prisoners access to funds, either through wages or from their own funds, has not kept pace. The SPS and

the prison should do more to support prisoners in this area, such as by increasing the amount of private funds which a prisoner is allowed to spend.

### **Standard 3: Personal Safety**

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The IPM team recorded mixed reports regarding safety throughout the year. For most of the year the team reported a positive and improving picture. There was some regression in the latter half of the reporting year coinciding with some high profile incidents. Whilst there were many reasons for this, the IPM team remains of the view that the regime, as stipulated by the contract between the SPS and Sodexo, is not in the best interests of the prisoners. Prisoners explained to IPMs that long periods of unlock without meaningful activity could increase the risk of incidents, and the related boredom can also encourage substance use. Prisoners noted that if you were on the hall, it was not easy to avoid trouble, and that staying in your cell aroused suspicion amongst peers. The prison, the SPS and the Scottish Government should work together to review the contract and find a solution that encourages meaningful activity, not just hours of meaningless unlock.

Despite the challenges, the IPM Team praise the work done by the prison to improve safety and note the overall reductions in violence compared with the previous reporting year.

The work around recovery, and particularly the employment of staff with lived experience was welcomed and is an example to other prisons. The number of sessions and the number of prisoners attending activities in the Recovery Café was positive, providing real support to those prisoners looking to overcome issues around addiction.

The commitment to have three staff on each hall remains a positive ambition and good progress was observed during the year in this regard. Having reasonable staffing levels and consistent officers on the halls brings better outcomes in terms of oversight of prisoners on the hall and during key times such as the serving of meals.

IPMs were saddened by the deaths in custody during the year and extend their sympathy to all those affected.

### **Standard 4: Effective, Courteous and Humane Use of Authority**

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Once again, and as is the case across the prison estate, IPMs remain concerned about the number of people being held in segregation, and the length of time some of them spend there. IPMs recognise the work done by the staff in the Care and Separation Unit, in incredibly challenging circumstances. The staff were aware of the needs of all of those in their care and showed compassion and empathy when dealing with them. The officers in the SRU had to deal with some individuals with extremely challenging behaviour during the year. The IPM team, as at other prisons, questions whether prison is the right place for some, rather than a secure psychiatric unit, and call on the Scottish Government to look at increasing the alternative options for those who need them.

There were also several prisoners being managed on rules in the halls, which created a number of challenges to the prison. Whilst acknowledging the need to keep safe, the IPM team would always look for a reduction in the use of segregation in prisons, wherever this takes place, and calls on the prison and the SPS to focus on this issue, at both Addiewell and beyond, to look at the reasons behind segregation and other potential ways to manage these groups of prisoners.

Where orderly rooms were observed they were well conducted. Prisoners were treated fairly, and proceedings were explained to them.

As mentioned above, and in last year's report, the IPM team is concerned about the number of people requiring an offence-protection regime in HMP Addiewell. Two whole halls are set aside for them, and yet there was also often an overspill onto a third hall. HMP Addiewell is not, in the

opinion of the IPM team, equipped to deal with these different populations. The SPS must look at their population strategy across the entire prison estate.

Action was taken by the prison during the year to resolve issues around the management of property. IPMs raised concerns about the management of property seized during searches, the control of property after prisoners were moved location, and general access issues. The prison acknowledged these issues and took steps to resolve them. This will require continued focus in the coming year.

## **Standard 5: Respect, Autonomy and Protection**

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The IPM team is delighted that work to put the complaints system onto the kiosks will be taken forward in this coming year, having raised it in the last report. This action should go a long way to resolving concerns by prisoners, as with many prisons, that complaints were not properly logged or dealt with. When checks were carried out on complaints, the process for collecting and responding was robust. The use of the kiosk should further improve this and be an exemplar of best practice within Scottish prisons.

As noted above, the regime and the prisoner population create difficulties for the staff to be able to provide the safe and engaging experience they would wish. Having everyone out of their cells on the halls creates logistical problems in managing those on offence and non-offence protection outwith the allocated halls and managing those on rules. Once again, the IPM team calls on the SPS to review the population strategy across the entire estate, and for the SPS, Scottish Government and Sodexo to review the regime Addiewell are being asked to deliver, to ensure it is in the best interests of the prisoners housed there.

The staff were upbeat and engaged, and generally reported positively on their roles, but were often inexperienced and appeared overstretched. Many of the issues brought to the attention of the IPMs were simple issues easy for hall staff to resolve. The prison should continue the positive work to support and develop their officer and first line manager groups.

The prisoner forums and recognition events remained beacons of good practice in the prison. The IPM team is keen to see how these will further develop over the coming year.

## **Standard 6: Purposeful Activity**

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As reported last year, where activity takes place, the offer was exceptional. Those attending spoke highly of the things they could do. Prisoners reported that for those that want to engage and can get onto the courses, they were able to take part in interesting and fulfilling activities, that they believe will help them in the future. The atmosphere in areas like trades, education, Librite Centre and the gym was overwhelmingly positive. Whilst there were many examples of good practice which cannot be listed, the IPMs noted the work done by an English teacher who was informed of a prisoner with literacy issues, and who then assisted him and ensured he got to education. This prisoner reported back to the IPMs the hugely beneficial impact this has had on him. The number of prisoners attending activities had increased from the previous year. The ambition for the prison is to continue this journey and get more prisoners attending and engaged in these areas.

Some prisoners continued to report that they could not get access to their legal entitlement of one hour in the fresh air when on rules. Some of these occasions were verified, whilst in other cases the IPM team established that prisoners had been offered time but not taken it. IPMs acknowledge the challenge of delivering time in the fresh air for all those being kept separate from the rest of the hall but reiterate that this must always be facilitated. Prison managers should ensure they are equipping the hall staff to provide this basic right to all prisoners.

The visits area was generally positive, and as noted above the staff were receptive to the views of prisoners and sought to make improvements when issues were brought to their attention. Prisoners' families mostly reported positively of their experiences of visits. One aspect that the

prison could do more around concerned the timeliness of visits sessions, to ensure that sessions finish on time, so family members relying on public transport are able to make their connections.

## **Standard 7: Transitions from Custody into the Community**

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As noted above, the central role people with lived experience of addiction play is to be commended and has made a real and positive impact on the prisoners who required these services. Across the prison, prisoners spoke in glowing terms about this aspect of their time in Addiewell.

The work of the Employability Team was also highlighted positively by the IPMs during the year. A job fair in the visits hall was well-attended and several prisoners identified routes to employment. The prison had also developed good links with a range of local and national employers to support prisoners into work. The prison employability team assisted 15 candidates directly into employment from prison. This work is vital.

Access to programmes continued to be a cause of concern for many prisoners. The waiting lists for programmes is an issue across the prison estate, but prisoners in Addiewell had a perception that they were less likely to be able to access courses and progress compared with those in SPS run prisons. The prison should consider what more could be done to resolve these concerns. The SPS and Sodexo should continue to explore delivering programmes at Addiewell.

The IPM team monitored one prisoner with acute needs over six months prior to release to track the process. They noted this was well-managed, the prisoner was provided with support and updates, and staff took a genuine interest in their care. This was noted as the standard for all.

## **Standard 8: Organisational Effectiveness**

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During the year the prison was generally responsive to issues and concerns raised by the IPM team. For example, taking immediate action when they were informed of an issue around an IPM being granted access to the prison. They engaged in constructive discussion about the issues the IPM team raised with them within monthly reports. The IPM team look forward to further developing their systems of communication and feedback in the coming year.

There were some issues raised during the year by prisoners who had concerns about the communications between the prison, the NHS team and the transport provider for some medical appointments. It is important that the prison ensures processes for managing these issues are kept under review.

Staffing levels generally seem to have been reasonably stable during the year, and it is now less common to find officers working on halls they do not normally cover. The level of experience also appeared to be slightly improved. Attention and focus should be maintained to continue to drive improvements around retention of staff and staffing levels. The appointment of three learner coaches to support new staff was a welcome initiative.

As noted above, the IPM team makes the point that the SPS and Sodexo should work together to review the contract and ensure it is in the best interests of the prisoners, and by extension society. If the regime is the best available, the IPM team questions why a similar system is not in place in the SPS run prisons.

The Team is pleased to report that whilst not all of the issues with the transport provider were resolved, the situation was significantly better than in previous years.



## Standard 9: Health and Wellbeing

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For most of the year the healthcare provision was showing a marked improvement on last year. However, many of these improvements stalled towards the second half of the year, and the team has faced staffing challenges that have affected this. These staffing issues, combined with some of the challenges around substance use and monitoring many prisoners suspected of being under the influence of drugs, proved difficult. The IPM team welcomes the commitment by the management team to meet regularly to understand the issues the Monitors are informed of by prisoners. The IPM team further welcomed the commitment to improve staffing levels and hope to see this make an impact in the coming year.

One area of concern that will be common across the prison estate is access to preventative healthcare for prisoners on remand, such as routine dental appointments. The IPM team is of the opinion that many of the rules around healthcare provision for remand prisoners are out of date and should be reviewed.

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### Key Issues

1. The contract and the regime
2. Staffing – recruitment and retention
3. Healthcare provision



### Encouraging Observations

The prison has embedded some of the good practice noted last year, for example around the appointment of specialist staff for violence reduction and addictions. The offender outcome offering is good, and the staff are willing and committed to driving forward improvements.

If staffing levels and retention rates can continue to improve, the prison is well placed to make further progress.