





NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRISON MONITORS (IPM) MID YEAR -REPORT

April - September 2024

		2024	2023
	Volunteers across 17 prisons	109	98
	Visits conducted	561	515
	Hours spent monitoring	1930	1825
	Requests received from prisoners	737	679

Last year's National IPM mid-year report highlighted concerns around overcrowding, prison regime, progression, staffing, the complaints system, prisoner escorts, medication dispensing, and the cost of living as persistent issues across Scottish prisons. Sadly, this report tells the same story.

Overcrowding continued to be the biggest single issue facing Scottish prisons, and its impact was felt in all establishments. It is unconscionable that in 2024, prisoners are still being asked to share cells that Victorian society deemed fit for only one person.

The effect of overcrowding was not only of concern for those being housed in cramped conditions, but impinged on the safety of prisoners, the ability to run a sufficient regime, and the opportunity for prisoners to access rehabilitation programmes or progress to less secure conditions. These problems were exacerbated by unfilled vacancies and staff absences. Meaningful activity was too often curtailed due to a lack of staff. These shortages, combined with a lack of activity spaces, is of particular concern for those on remand who were too often denied access to a fulfilling regime.

Despite these pressures, IPMs witnessed many good things. Staff acted with compassion and humanity. Activities, when they took place, provided a real opportunity for prisoners to start a journey away from crime. The improvement of Prisoner Forums and PIACS at some establishments demonstrated the impact that can be made when prisons engage with prisoners and allow them meaningful participation.

The IPM Team are pleased to report that the number of volunteers, visits and time spent monitoring in prisons increased in 2024, compared to 2023¹. This was matched by a commensurate increase in requests for our services.

To contact the IPMs call 0800 056 7476

¹ Data for both years covers only the period April-September. Full year stats are available in HMIPS Annual reports