

**Inspection of Court Custody Provision
Perth Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Court**

1 October 2025



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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland (HMCIPS) is required to inspect the conditions in which prisoners are transported or held across Scotland to establish the treatment of, and the conditions for, prisoners and to report publicly on the findings. This includes prisoners, prisoner transport and Court Custody Units (CCU) where prisoners and custodies are held awaiting appearance on court.

This report is part of the programme of inspections of Court Custody Provision carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS).

These inspections also contribute to the UK's response to its international obligations under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). OPCAT requires that all places of detention are visited regularly by independent bodies – known as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) – which monitor the treatment of and conditions for detention. HMIPS is one of 21 bodies making up the NPM in the UK.

The inspections of CCUs are informed by a set of Standards as set out in our document 'Standards for Inspecting Court Custody Provision in Scotland,' published March 2017 which can be found at

[HMIPS Standards for Inspecting Court Custody Provision in Scotland](#)

These Standards contribute positively to the effective scrutiny of court custody provision in Scotland and will encourage continuous improvement in the quality of care and custody of people held in court cells.

The Standards provide assurance to Ministers and the public that inspections are conducted in line with a framework that is consistent, and that assessments are made against appropriate criteria. This report is set out to reflect the performance against these Standards.

HMIPS assimilates information resulting in evidence-based findings utilising several different techniques. These include:

- obtaining information and documents from the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) and the court inspected
- shadowing and observing staff as they perform their duties within the CCU
- interviewing custodies and staff on a one-to-one basis
- inspecting a wide range of facilities impacting on both custodies and staff
- reviewing policies, procedures and performance reports.

The information gathered facilitates the compilation of a complete analysis of the CCU against the Standards used. A record of the evidence gathered is produced by those undertaking the inspection against each of the Standards inspected.

HMIPS takes a human rights-based approach to ensure that both the standards and the principles of human rights are integrated into policy as well as the day to day running of organisations under scrutiny.

This report has been created based around a human rights-based approach known as the PANEL principles, set out as follows:

Participation: participation must be active, free, meaningful and give attention to issues of accessibility, including access to information in a form and a language which can be understood.

Accountability: accountability requires effective monitoring of human rights standards as well as effective remedies where human rights breaches occur. Is there evidence of issues raised previously now having been addressed?

Non-discrimination and equality: a human rights-based approach means that all forms of discrimination in the realisation of rights must be prohibited, prevented and eliminated. Are the most vulnerable and at risk identified and supported effectively?

Empowerment: a human rights-based approach means that individuals should know their rights or be made aware of them. Is information readily available and support provided so individuals know their rights and entitlements while in custody?

Legality: a human rights-based approach requires the recognition of rights as legally enforceable entitlements and is linked with national and international human rights law. Are the processes and procedures adopted in the CCU in line with legal obligations and human rights standards?

These are known as the **PANEL** principles.

Overview by His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

Perth Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Court was located on Tay Street in Perth. This listed building, situated on the banks of the River Tay, was constructed in 1819. It comprised five courtrooms and was served by three resident Sheriffs. The premises also accommodated the Sheriff Principal, the Sheriff Clerk and their supporting staff, together with police representatives, witness services, court social work and the CCU.

The CCU was in the basement of the building, with its primary entrance at the rear, within a small, unsecured courtyard. Although this courtyard could have been secured using a lockable gate, thus enhancing safety during the transfer of custodies to and from the CCU, it was instead used for parking by resident sheriffs. In addition, the area was not suitable for accommodating larger custody vehicles that were therefore unloaded in a public car park.

The CCU had five cells, all of which were operational at the time of inspection. The cells varied in size and collectively had the ability to accommodate up to 14 custodies, which was accepted as the unit's maximum capacity.

On the day of inspection, the CCU had three adult male custodies. Of those custodies one had come from Police Scotland and two from HMP Perth. The CCU staff correctly placed them in single cells following cell sharing risk assessments completed by the CCU manager.

As with many other CCUs, Perth was in an old building where there were no disabled toilets or access for disabled people internally or from the rear courtyard due to stairs. This meant the CCU was incapable of safely accommodating disabled people. The solution was to hold custodies with mobility issues in witness rooms, with access to disabled toilets next to the public areas within the court building awaiting their appearance in court.

The overall condition of the CCU was assessed as poor. As evidenced by the photographs included in this report, the corridor and interview rooms were in significant need of both structural and cosmetic refurbishment. The doors, walls, and ceilings of the cells showed that extensive graffiti and general deterioration had been present for many years, courtesy of "date stamped" damage. Cell number one had plaster failing and falling from the walls and required repainting. This issue had previously been identified as a recommendation during the 2020 HMIPS inspection. The prompt removal of graffiti is essential to enable CCU staff to monitor and accurately record any instances of criminal damage caused by persons in custody.

The cells were cold at the time of inspection, with staff reporting that conditions deteriorated significantly during the winter months. CCU staff had independently maintained a supply of warm clothing, sourced at their own initiative, to provide to custodies due to the cold temperatures in the cells. This was observed first hand by inspectors during the visit, by a custody complaining of being cold and asking for a blanket. The overall condition of the CCU required significant improvement. The poor state of repair and inadequate heating and ventilation collectively contributed to an environment that did not meet the reasonable expectations of custodial standards. Action is needed to address these issues through refurbishment and the introduction of measures better to support the welfare of custodies held there.

With seven recommendations and no advisories or areas of good practice, inspectors found the CCU to be a well-run facility, with knowledgeable and well-motivated staff. The manager was relatively new in post and displayed a sound understanding of process and procedures.

On the PANEL principles, we found that in all areas the human rights of custodies were being actively considered.

Sara Snell
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

Inspection Team

Graeme Neill
Calum McCarthy

Recommendations

Standard	Quality Indicator	Quality Indicator Number	Recommendation	Relevant Agency
1 1	1 3	6 1	Cell allocations should not be predetermined based on limited information held only by the contractor.	GEOAmey
2	2	1	Cells and corridors should be repaired and painted.	SCTS
2	1	2	The ventilation and heating system must provide a consistent and suitable temperature for safe and humane occupancy.	SCTS
3 3 3	2 2 2	2 3 4	Health and Safety documentation should be kept up to date and accurate records kept of inspections and staff responsibilities.	GEOAmey
3	3	3	Handcuff Risk Assessment updates on a PER should be accompanied by a short explanatory text.	GEOAmey
4	5	7	To ensure the safety and integrity of custodies property, adequate lockable storage facilities must be provided.	SCTS
5	1	3	Solicitor meeting rooms require repainting.	SCTS

Advisories

Standard	Quality Indicator	Quality Indicator Number	Advisory	Relevant Agency
None				

Good practice

Standard	Quality Indicator	Quality Indicator Number	Good Practice	Relevant Agency
None				

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CCU

Description	Name/Number
Name of CCU Manager on duty	Scott Lynch
Number of core staff required for CCU	8 + 1
Number of staff working	4 + 1
Number of cells	5
Number of cells that are operational	5
Total custody capacity	14
Number of interview rooms	2
Number of non SPS custodies expected today	1
Number of SPS prisoners expected	2
Number of custody courts running	1
Number of virtual appearances expected	0
SCTS representative/contact	Neil Rawlings

DISTRIBUTION OF PRISONERS/CUSTODIES

Adult Males	<21 Males	<18 Males
3	0	0

Adult Females	<21 Females	<18 Females
0	0	0

STANDARDS, COMMENTARY AND QUALITY INDICATORS

STANDARD 1: LAWFUL AND TRANSPARENT USE OF CUSTODY

The custody service provider (“the provider”) complies with administrative and procedural requirements of the law and takes appropriate action in response to the findings and recommendations of official bodies that exercise supervisory jurisdiction over it.

The provider ensures that all custodies are lawfully detained. Each custody’s time in the Court Custody Unit (CCU) is accurately calculated; they are properly classified and allocated to cells appropriately. The provider cooperates fully with agencies that have powers to investigate matters in the custody areas.

	QUALITY INDICATOR 1: Personal Escort Records (PERs)	Not observed	Yes	No
1.1.1	Is each custody positively identified at the time of arrival and are they named on the Personal Escort Record (PER) form?		X	
1.1.2	Does identification take place out of hearing of any other custody?		X	
1.1.3	When names and dates of birth are obtained is confirmation made that the custody is due to appear before the court that day?		X	
1.1.4	Is there a process in place to record the requirement and any subsequent provision for translation services?		X	
1.1.5	Do PERs include recording custody movements, any significant activities or events, timings including arrival and departure times, when case was concluded, any provision or offer of meals, drinks or healthcare?		X	
1.1.6	Are PERs accurately completed and fully updated?			X
	In summary, are Personal Escort Record (PER) forms accurately populated, and all relevant sections completed?			X

	QUALITY INDICATOR 2: Custody Procedures	Not observed	Yes	No
1.2.1	Is information given to custodies in a language (and format) that they understand?		X	
1.2.2	Was the custody asked questions regarding the following:		X	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Racism ▪ Homophobia ▪ Transgender discrimination ▪ Religious discrimination ▪ Bullying ▪ Any cell sharing issues. ▪ Risk of suicide or self-harm ▪ Solicitor access, their own or one will be provided 			
1.2.3	Are medical or special needs, including relevant risk factors identified through information provided from appropriate third parties and were they acted upon?		X	
1.2.4	Are any interventions or interactions recorded including searches or risk factors in relation to the custody in the CCU or during transit?		X	
1.2.5	Are custodies given information on what to expect whilst in the CCU?		X	
1.2.6	Are CCU staff proactive at taking into account changes of circumstances for new arrivals into custody?	X		
1.2.7	Where relevant, is the GEOAmeY IT system updated and maintained, including the most recent custody photograph?		X	
1.2.8	If where a custody is admitted directly from court, do CCU staff enquire as to whether there are any urgent personal, domestic or legal concerns that require immediate attention and bring these to the attention of the court or prison where necessary?	X		
1.2.9	If a custody was committed to prison and required an interpreter; was the receiving prison notified to enable arrangements to be made to assist in their admission?	X		
	In summary, are all procedures for identifying those in custody fully complied with, are staff proactive in assessing their understanding, needs and whether they require further support in order to understand basic essential information?		X	

	QUALITY INDICATOR 3: Cell Sharing Risk Assessment (CSRA)	Not observed	Yes	No
1.3.1	Are custodies allocated a cell according to their legal status, classification, vulnerability, medical condition, sensory or physical impairment, risks and needs?			X
1.3.2	Was the approach taken individualised and took into account the preference of the custody where possible?		X	
1.3.3	Are those under 21 years of age kept separate from adults?		X	
1.3.4	Are those under 18 years of age kept separate from all other custodies?		X	
1.3.5	Are females kept separate from males?		X	
1.3.6	Are remand or civil custodies held separately from convicted custodies so far as is reasonably practicable?		X	
1.3.7	Are custodies informed of their allocation courteously and able to communicate freely any needs or concerns they may have?		X	
	In summary, was a CSRA carried out on arrival, taking account of individual characteristic (including gender, vulnerability, security risk, state of mental health or personal medical condition) and then allocated to an appropriate cell?			X

Standard 1 Summary	
	<p>The desk officer demonstrated a clear understanding of the procedures for identifying individuals in custody upon arrival and informed them what to expect during their stay.</p> <p>While questions regarding risk assessment and cell sharing suitability were asked, there was concern that cell allocations appeared to be predetermined based on limited information held by GEOAmev. Cell allocation decisions should only be made once all relevant information has been obtained.</p> <p>Staff were able to clearly articulate the procedures for identifying and responding to changes in circumstances. They also demonstrated an understanding of the importance of assigning cells in accordance with policy requirements, considering factors such as age, sex, and legal status.</p>
Standard 1 Recommendations/Advisories/Good Practice	
1.1.6 1.3.1	<p>Recommendation: Cell allocations should not be predetermined based on limited information held only by GEOAmev.</p>

STANDARD 2: DECENCY, DIGNITY, RESPECT AND EQUALITY

The custody areas should meet the basic requirements of decency and all custodies within the CCU are treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

All custody areas should be of adequate size for the number of persons they are used to detain, well maintained, clean and hygienic and have adequate lighting. Each custody should have access to toilets, be provided with necessary toiletries, and offered a nutritious meal. These needs should be met in ways that promote each custody's sense of personal and cultural identity and self-respect.

The facilities management and the physical security aspects of the Criminal Appeal Courts, High Court of Justiciary, Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Courts throughout Scotland is the responsibility of SCTS. This includes the daily cleaning of court facilities, and the physical maintenance or repair of a court.

	QUALITY INDICATOR 1: Custody Area	Not observed	Yes	No
2.1.1	Are cells of an adequate size for occupancy?		X	
2.1.2	Do cells have appropriate furnishing, adequate lighting, heating and ventilation for fresh air and meet all requirements for Health & Safety?			X
2.1.3	Are accessible and safer cells fit-for-purpose and of sufficient number to be available when required?		X	
2.1.4	Is the maintenance of the CCU achieved through a structured programme where faults or defects are logged and dealt with efficiently?			X
	In summary, are the custody areas appropriately equipped and constructed for their intended use and maintained to an appropriate standard?			X

	QUALITY INDICATOR 2: Hygiene	Not observed	Yes	No
2.2.1	Are all parts of the CCU used by custodies kept clean at all times, well maintained and regularly painted?			X
2.2.2	Does the service provider ensure appropriate cleaning records are maintained, audited and made available to support any reported complaint(s) or defects, or for review of maintenance, cleaning or hygiene standards?		X	
2.2.3	Are custodies encouraged to keep the CCU clean and tidy?		X	

2.2.4	Is any graffiti or damage caused challenged, recorded and reported immediately to the appropriate authorities, i.e. SCTS or Police Scotland?		X	
2.2.5	If an SPS prisoner's behaviour requires them to be placed on report does the service provider do this?		X	
2.2.6	Are hygiene regulations and infection control standards observed and do SCTS have a process in place to deal with any incidents?		X	
	In summary, are good levels of cleanliness and hygiene observed throughout the custody areas ensuring procedures for the control of infection and biohazard incidents are followed?			X

QUALITY INDICATOR 3: Toilets		Not observed	Yes	No
2.3.1	Does the service provider ensure that male and female custodies have access to toileting and washing facilities, offering adequate privacy, enabling them to maintain a reasonable standard of personal cleanliness and hygiene?		X	
2.3.2	Is there disabled access to toilets?			X
2.3.3	Are soap, toilet paper and hand towels available?		X	
2.3.4	Are personal hygiene products readily available, if not are signs providing information on how to access such products displayed?		X	
2.3.5	Are proper disposal arrangements for sanitary items available. Where possible is there a female CCU member of staff available to deal with such requests?		X	
	In summary, do all custodies have access to suitable toileting facilities on request?			X

QUALITY INDICATOR 4: Meals		Not observed	Yes	No
2.4.1	Is there a range of good quality nutritional food available that meets the needs of those with special dietary requirements, including those arising from cultural or religious beliefs?		X	
2.4.2	Are hot drinks (tea and coffee) provided on arrival at the CCU and at each mealtime whilst within the court custody suites?		X	

2.4.3	Do custodies have access to water at least every 2.5 hours or on request, and is this recorded on the PER or the IT system?		X	
2.4.4	Are meals provided to any custody in court or in transit during the afternoon who are considered likely to be returned to prison after 17:00?		X	
2.4.5	When the service provider is required to provide a lunch and an evening meal, is one of them hot?		X	
2.4.6	Is the provision for hand washing/sanitation provided immediately prior to mealtimes?		X	
2.4.7	Are food hygiene rules respected and observed?		X	
	In summary, are all meals provided to custodies well presented, nutritious, varied, conform to dietary, religious, cultural or medical requirements and are served at the appropriate temperature?		X	

Standard 2 Summary	
	<p>There was one male and one female toilet, both of which were found to be clean, functional, and in good working order.</p> <p>Stairs leading to the CCU from the external entrance and internally meant there was no access for disabled custodies or visitors. Inspectors were informed that the solution was that disabled custodies were held in a room on the ground floor, near to the courtroom and to disabled toilets prior to their appearance in court.</p> <p>The general condition of the cells and adjoining corridors was poor. It was difficult for staff to keep on top of criminal damage due to the overall poor state of the infrastructure, but they still warned custodies to not cause damage and were proactive in monitoring their activities. Many walls and surfaces throughout the CCU were marked with graffiti, several of which were date stamped, clearly indicating that this issue has not been addressed for many years. There was little evidence that the maintenance of the CCU was achieved through a structured programme where faults or defects were logged and dealt with efficiently. The actions from a joint SCTS and GEOAmev Health and safety meeting in September 2025, detailed a number of concerns that needed to be addressed. These included fire safety, trip hazards, staff safety and structural repairs. (See following photos)</p> <p>The CCU would benefit from a complete repainting and refurbishment programme to improve both appearance and hygiene standards.</p> <p>The CCU had an overall impression of dampness and uncleanliness, likely stemming from insufficient ventilation and a lack of recent maintenance. The ventilation grilles had poor airflow and cleaning them may have improved the supply of fresh air throughout the cells and corridors. The environment within</p>

	<p>the CCU did not promote a sense of cleanliness or comfort, which negatively affected both custodies and staff working conditions.</p> <p>The heating system within the cells was found to be inadequate. Temperatures were notably low, creating an uncomfortable environment for those being held. Due to these low temperatures, CCU staff were often required to provide additional clothing to custodies. This issue requires urgent attention, and the heating system should be reviewed, repaired, or replaced to ensure it provides a consistent and suitable temperature for safe and humane occupancy.</p> <p>Despite the environmental shortcomings, all cells were equipped with functioning CCTV cameras. These systems were operating correctly and allowed for continuous observation of custodies.</p> <p>It was also noted that unlike Aberdeen CCU, Perth did not have access to petty cash funds for the purchase of specific food items required to meet dietary or medical needs. This restricted staff from being able to meet special dietary requirements, which could affect the overall care of custodies.</p> <p>Sanitary products within the CCU were well signposted and easily accessible. The process for the supply and disposal of these products was effective and ensured that dignity and hygiene needs were properly supported.</p>
Standard 2 Recommendations/Advisories/Good Practice	
2.2.1	Recommendation: Cells and corridors should be repaired and painted.
2.1.2	Recommendation: The ventilation and heating system must provide a consistent and suitable temperature for safe and humane occupancy.

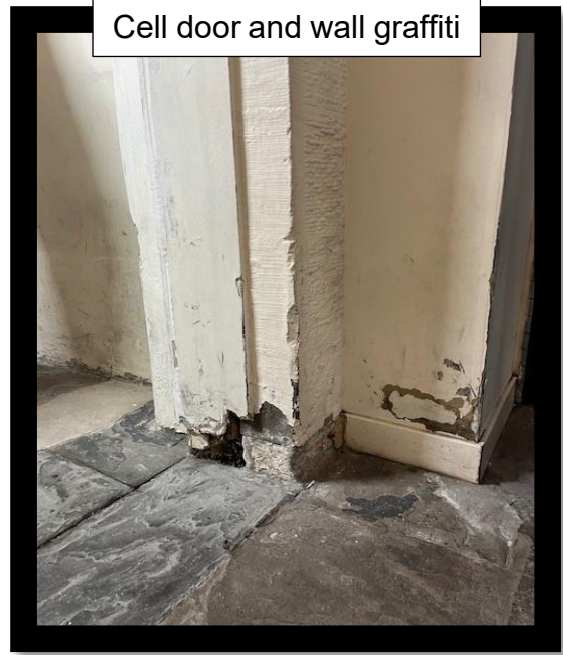


Failing plaster – Cell 1





Cell ceiling graffiti damage



Cell door and wall graffiti

Poor structural state - Corridor

STANDARD 3: PERSONAL SAFETY

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of custodies while in the CCU.

All appropriate steps are taken to minimise the levels of harm to which custodies are exposed. Appropriate steps are taken to protect custodies from harm from others or themselves. Where violence or accidents do occur, the circumstances are thoroughly investigated and appropriate management action taken.

	QUALITY INDICATOR 1: Safety	Not observed	Yes	No
3.1.1	Are any custodies being treated under the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) Suicide Prevention Strategy (Talk to Me) treated with care, compassion and understanding by staff?		X	
3.1.2	Are staff appropriately trained and proactive in recognising and responding to signs that indicate a custody may be at risk of suicide or self-harm?		X	
3.1.3	Are all staff aware of the SPS Suicide Prevention Strategy?		X	
3.1.4	Do staff deal with each custody on an individual basis?		X	
3.1.5	Are all computer systems, paperwork and PER forms kept up to date in respect of custody safety?		X	
3.1.6	Is information shared between the CCU, Police Scotland, Social Work, health provider and the receiving prison to ensure that the best care is provided for those who are in a risk category?		X	
	In summary, has the provider put in place thorough and compassionate practices to identify and care for those identified as being at risk of suicide or self-harm?		X	

	QUALITY INDICATOR 2: Health and Safety	Not observed	Yes	No
3.2.1	Are checks (Alpha checks) carried out before custodies arrive and after the CCU is closed?		X	
3.2.2	Are Health and Safety roles allocated in the CCU and staff aware of what these roles are to ensure statutory compliance?			X
3.2.3	Is all documentation kept up to date and do CCU staff meet regularly to discuss Health and Safety matters?			X

3.2.4	Are regular Health and Safety inspections carried out with actions clearly identified and allocated?			X
	In summary, are the requirements of Health and Safety legislation observed throughout the custody areas and security checks carried out regularly and thoroughly?			X

	QUALITY INDICATOR 3: Risk Assessments	Not observed	Yes	No
3.3.1	Does the CCU have a complete set of risk assessments that are regularly reviewed and updated?		X	
3.3.2	Are the risk assessments accessible to all staff?		X	
3.3.3	Are the cell sharing risk assessment (CSRA) and Handcuff Risk Assessment (HRA) outcomes clearly recorded on the PER?			X
3.3.4	Does the CCU have in place a system that ensures the appropriate separation of custodies at all times, including during transit for example, where two people are involved in the same domestic abuse case they should not travel in the same transport to court, from a police station or prison?		X	
	In summary, do all activities take place according to recorded safe systems of work which are easily accessible and based on appropriately completed risk assessments?			X

	QUALITY INDICATOR 4: Risk Management	Not observed	Yes	No
3.4.1	Do the CCU staff use their interpersonal skills to build and maintain relationships to ensure that any aggression or violence is minimised and do not encourage any escalation of such behaviour?		X	
3.4.2	Where risks are identified do staff react quickly to resolve any issues?	X		
	In summary, does the attitude, behaviour and approach of staff contribute to the lowering of risk of aggression and violence, and are reasonable steps taken to minimise situations that are known to increase such behaviour. Where such situations are unavoidable are appropriate levels of supervision maintained?		X	

	QUALITY INDICATOR 5: Vulnerability	Not observed	Yes	No
3.5.1	Do CCU staff take an individualised, considered and compassionate approach when dealing with those identified as being vulnerable or having a heightened risk of harm or abuse from others?	X		
3.5.2	Are CCU staff sensitive to any change in a custody's circumstances and act accordingly to meet any identified risks, for example, when their status has changed from remand to convicted?		X	
3.5.3	Where additional needs are identified, is there a process in place for a custody to be provided with assistance, for example foreign language translation or other communication challenges?		X	
	In summary, is particular care taken of any custody whose appearance, behaviour, background or circumstances leave them at heightened risk of harm or abuse from others?		X	

	QUALITY INDICATOR 6: Investigations	Not observed	Yes	No
3.6.1	Is there is an understanding of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour by CCU staff and is it challenged and that those found responsible dealt with?		X	
3.6.2	Are custodies and staff both encouraged and supported to report incidents and do they have confidence to do so?		X	
	In summary, are all allegations or incidents of mistreatment, intimidation, hate, bullying, harassment or violence recorded and investigated by a person of sufficient independence with any findings being acted upon by management?		X	

	QUALITY INDICATOR 7: Contingencies	Not observed	Yes	No
3.7.1	Is there an up-to-date suite of contingency plans that are readily available to all staff and are tested annually?		X	
3.7.2	Do any plans include how to manage any major or minor incidents of disorder including plans for evacuation, high levels of sickness or absence amongst staff?		X	

3.7.3	Is there a back-up facility in place to ensure any data held on IT systems can be retrieved?		X	
	In summary, is there an appropriate set of readily available contingency plans for managing emergencies and unpredictable events and are staff adequately trained in the roles they adopt in implementing the plans?		X	

Standard 3 Summary				
<p>Health and Safety folders had last been updated in 2024, with no record of any Health and Safety checks having been carried out more recently.</p> <p>There were no individuals in custody subject to the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) “Talk To Me” Suicide Prevention Strategy. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the strategy and were able to articulate when and how to implement it effectively when required.</p> <p>Staff demonstrated a sound knowledge of how to respond promptly and appropriately to emerging issues, including changes in behaviour among individuals who had received unexpected sentences, those exhibiting signs of crisis, or those presenting a potential risk of violence.</p> <p>Whilst inspectors found that the term “Handcuff Risk Assessment (HRA)” was being accurately recorded on Personal Escort Records (PERs) by GEOAmeY staff, there was no narrative available to allow scrutiny around what decisions were taken as part of the assessment to determine if handcuffs should or should not be worn by a custody. It has been identified through this, and many other inspections, that the default position for GEOAmeY staff escorting custodies appears to be that handcuffs are always applied.</p> <p>HMIPS understands that there is not a set list of questions to be considered when completing a HRA, but that it is “dynamic” and carried out by the escorting officers at the time of the escort. This “dynamic” approach prevents an effective way of evaluating the competency of such assessments, and if handcuffs are being used excessively and unnecessarily.</p>				
Standard 3 Recommendations/Advisories/Good Practice				
3.2.2 3.2.3 3.2.4	<p>Recommendation: Health and Safety documentation should be kept up to date and accurate records kept of inspections and staff responsibilities.</p>			
3.3.3	<p>Recommendation: Handcuff Risk Assessment updates on a PER should be accompanied by a short explanatory text.</p>			

STANDARD 4: EFFECTIVE, COURTEOUS AND HUMANE EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY

The implementation of security and supervisory duties is balanced by courteous and humane treatment of custodies in the CCU.

Procedures relating to perimeter, entry and exit security, and the personal safety, searching, supervision and escorting of custodies are implemented effectively. The level of security and supervision is proportionate to the risks presented at any given time.

	QUALITY INDICATOR 1: Duties	Not observed	Yes	No
4.1.1	Do CCU staff discharge their duties courteously and in a respectful manner while maintaining an acceptable level of authority?		X	
4.1.2	Do CCU staff work as a team evidencing good communication?		X	
	In summary, do court custody staff discharge supervisory and security duties courteously and in doing so respect the individuals given circumstances?		X	

	QUALITY INDICATOR 2: Movements and Transfers	Not observed	Yes	No
4.2.1	Are there clearly defined procedures in place for any movement within the CCU including to the courtroom or release and is such movement implemented effectively and courteously?		X	
4.2.2	Are all movements to and from escort vehicles carried out in a safe and controlled manner, with only one custody entering the CCU at a time?		X	
4.2.3	Are CCU staff seen to be carrying out assessments to manage those at risk or likely to be detrimental to the good running of the unit?		X	
4.2.4	Are mechanical restraints such as handcuffs and escort chains only used where risk assessments deem them appropriate?		X	
4.2.5	Do all custodies depart the CCU to a place of detention within two hours of receipt of the court documentation (excluding Glasgow Sheriff Court where a 90-minute timescale applies for a custody being escorted to HMP Barlinnie)?		X	

4.2.6	Was the CCU clear of all custodies within 30 minutes of the receipt of the final court documentation for that day?	X		
4.2.7	Do the CCU staff ensure the accurate recording of all discharge, bail or other disposals?		X	
4.2.8	Are instructions from the Court included within the custody or court records and the PER, and any additional release conditions confirmed before the custody is released?		X	
4.2.9	Do the CCU staff ensure that all custodies are liberated/released as soon as practicable and no later than one hour from the completed court documentation?		X	
4.2.10	Were all custodies adequately clothed and provided with food and a drink, fit to travel, have their property, cash and valuables returned to them and be supplied with sufficient funds to travel if required?		X	
	In summary, are the systems and procedures for the movement, transfer and release of custodies implemented effectively and courteously?		X	

	QUALITY INDICATOR 3: Visitors	Not observed	Yes	No
4.3.1	Is there a structured and systematic approach to physical security that clearly identifies risk and responds to it effectively, including access for visitors to the CCU?		X	
4.3.2	Is there adequate accommodation to facilitate such visitors?		X	
4.3.3	When dealing with all people who visit the CCU do staff always behave in courteous and professional manner?		X	
4.3.4	Do staff understand their roles in terms of security?		X	
	In summary, are the systems and procedures for access and egress of visitors to the CCU implemented effectively and courteously. Is there adequate accommodation to facilitate such visitors?		X	

	QUALITY INDICATOR 4: Security	Not observed	Yes	No
4.4.1	Is there a structured and systematic approach to physical security that clearly identifies risk and responds to it effectively, including the access of people, mail, goods and vehicles to the CCU?		X	
4.4.2	Where court-based CCTV cameras are fitted, are they used to supervise and monitor the movement of custodies, and are they in good working order?		X	
4.4.3	Is recorded material made available for assessment and investigation and stored as per contract guidelines?		X	
	In summary, are the systems and procedures for monitoring the movement and activities of individuals inside the CCU implemented effectively, and accurately recorded on the appropriate system?		X	

	QUALITY INDICATOR 5: Searching & Property	Not observed	Yes	No
4.5.1	Are all searches carried out in strict conformity with the relevant legislation?		X	
4.5.2	Are all searches carried out with proper regard for the individual's privacy and dignity, for instance, the custody must never be fully naked at any time, and any search must be carried out by staff of the same gender?		X	
4.5.3	Were custodies seen to be thoroughly rubbed down and searched when entering the CCU and any handheld detectors utilised where an Archway Metal Detector is not available?		X	
4.5.4	Is all property checked on entering the CCU?		X	
4.5.5	Do CCU staff ensure that any property, cash and valuables belonging to a custody correctly recorded and accounted for?		X	
4.5.6	Is there a process in place in the event of mishandling of property or loss.		X	
4.5.7	Are facilities lockfast and adequate for storing the amount of property required securely and not accessible other than by CCU staff?			X

4.5.8	Are all custodies personal property, valuables and cash released appropriately?		X	
	In summary, is the law concerning the searching of a custody and their property in the custody areas implemented thoroughly?			X

QUALITY INDICATOR 6: Use of Force		Not observed	Yes	No
4.6.1	Is the use of force or restraint proportionate to the risk posed and no more than was necessary for the situation?		X	
4.6.2	In the event of a planned or unplanned use of force or restraint, was the procedure followed meticulously, and all accompanying paperwork filled out to a high standard including the PER, was this supervised by a senior member of staff?		X	
4.6.3	If a planned removal took place was it video recorded?		X	
4.6.4	If physical force was applied, was the custody medically examined by a healthcare professional as soon as practicable, no later than within one hour?		X	
4.6.5	Are reviews of all cases involving use of force or restraint regularly undertaken to observe and analyse any trends that may be appearing?		X	
4.6.6	Are CCU management and staff able to talk through the process for the use of force or restraint and how it should be documented?		X	
	In summary, were physical force and restraints only used when necessary, and strictly in accordance with the law and the service provider's' control and restraint guidance?		X	

Standard 4 Summary	
	<p>Inspectors did not observe the departure of the final custody from the CCU. They did witness several individuals being released. In each instance, discharge and disposal documentation was accurately completed, and the release process was carried out within a reasonable timeframe.</p> <p>The CCU contained a single double cupboard designated for the storage of property. However, this cupboard was not lockable and was insufficient in size to securely hold the belongings of more than a few custodies. Staff reported that property was frequently left unsecured on the floor surrounding the cupboard due to limited space.</p>

	During the inspection, there were no instances of planned or unplanned use of force, with the last incident being more than 12 months ago. CCU staff and managers demonstrated a thorough understanding of the use of force procedures, including the proper completion of documentation, the recording of planned removals, and the review process conducted through GEOAmeys head office.
Standard 4 Recommendations/Advisories/Good Practice	
4.5.7	Recommendation: To ensure the safety and integrity of custodies property, adequate lockable storage facilities must be provided.

STANDARD 5: RESPECT, AUTONOMY AND PROTECTION AGAINST MISTREATMENT

Staff treat all custodies respectfully. A custody’s right to statutory protections and the complaints processes are also respected.

Staff engage with custodies respectfully, positively and constructively. Custodies are kept informed about the progress of their court case and are treated humanely and with understanding.

	QUALITY INDICATOR 1: Respect and Rights	Not observed	Yes	No
5.1.1	Do the CCU staff regularly keep the custodies informed of any progress of their court case and the process for liberation or transfer to a prison, including timescales?		X	
5.1.2	When asked at any time were custodies able to confirm that they are aware of the progress of their court case?		X	
5.1.3	Are solicitors meeting rooms adequate and provide confidentiality whilst being easily monitored by staff?			X
5.1.4	Did all sensitive conversations take place in a location away from the hearing of others. This includes assessing risk at the point of admission to the CCU?		X	
5.1.5	Do staff ensure all custodies rights to confidentiality are in place?		X	
5.1.6	Do staff ensure all custodies rights to statutory protection are in place if required due to offence types or potential enemies?		X	
	In summary, the use of disrespectful language or behaviour is not tolerated from staff or those in custody, are relationships between staff and custodies respectful?		X	

	QUALITY INDICATOR 2: – Complaints	Not observed	Yes	No
5.2.1	Are complaint forms readily available for custodies?		X	
5.2.2	Are notices visible explaining how to complain and to whom and is this information readily available to those where English is not their first language?		X	
5.2.3	Do CCU staff ensure that any person wishing to make a complaint is assisted when necessary?		X	

	In summary, does the complaints process work well?		X	
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Standard 5 Summary	
	The solicitors meeting rooms were adequate and provided confidentiality but needed painting (See photo).
Standard 5 Recommendations/Advisories/Good Practice	
5.1.3	Agency meeting rooms are in poor condition and require painting.



Solicitor meeting room

STANDARD 6: HEALTH, WELLBEING AND MEDICAL TREATMENT

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure the health and wellbeing of custodies while in the CCU, and appropriate and timeous medical treatment is available when required.

Where it is necessary to do so, custodies should receive treatment that takes account of all relevant NHS standards, guidelines and evidence-based treatments.

	QUALITY INDICATOR 1: – Health	Not observed	Yes	No
6.1.1	Do any custodies reporting illness, a medical complaint or injury have their concerns recorded on their PER (This includes where use of C&R techniques, restraint or physical force have been applied)?		X	
6.1.2	Do custodies have access to healthcare or medical treatment where required, within one hour?		X	
6.1.3	If medical care cannot be provided within one hour, do the CCU staff ensure appropriate care is provided until the medical provider attends?		X	
6.1.4	Is there at least one staff member trained in emergency first aid on duty in the CCU at any given time?		X	
6.1.5	Has access to the nearest defibrillator been identified?		X	
6.1.6	Is all prescribed medication accurately documented on PER forms and are staff aware of procedures for dispensing?		X	
6.1.7	Is any prescribed medication in the possession of a custody available as per prescription instructions?	X		
6.1.8	Is the CCU appropriately equipped for the prevention and control of infection?		X	
	In summary, is any treatment provided in custody undertaken by an appropriately qualified professional and meets accepted standards and timescales?		X	

Standard 6 Summary	
	A good demonstration of process and custody care by GEOAmey staff, with the provision of professional treatment for custodies within required timescales.

	Standard 6 Recommendations/Advisories/Good Practice
	None

Acronyms and Glossary

CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CCU	Court Custody Unit
CCV	Court Custody Van
CSRA	Cell Sharing Risk Assessment
Custody	A person held in the CCU who is not a prisoner
HMIPS	HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
HRA	Handcuff Risk Assessment
NPM	National Preventive Mechanism
OPCAT	Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
PPE	Personal protective Equipment
PER	Prisoner Escort Record
Prisoner	Person in the care of a prison
SCTS	Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service
SPS	Scottish Prison Service



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

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HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
Room Y.1.4
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
Edinburgh
EH11 3XD