



HMIPS
HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
INSPECTING AND MONITORING

News Release

A Thematic Review of Prisoner Progression in Scottish Prisons

The Scottish penal system has long been regarded as one of the most progressive in the world, with a strong emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration. However, Scotland's prison population remains amongst the highest in western Europe.

Scotland holds a unique position, with its own distinct legislative framework and a carefully designed pathway for prisoner progression. The purpose of this review was to critically examine the various stages of this pathway, evaluating their impact on reducing reoffending rates and promoting successful reintegration into society. The review has mainly focussed on the progression system as it applies to adult male convicted prisoners.

This review's primary objective was to highlight the key factors that contribute to an effective prisoner progression system and where that may be falling down. By analysing the existing policies, programmes, and support mechanisms, we aim to provide valuable insights into what works and what should be enhanced.

Moreover, this review acknowledges the challenges faced by the Scottish penal system, including high rates of imprisonment and the increasingly complex needs of individuals in custody. We recognise that prisoner progression is a multifaceted process that requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including prison staff, rehabilitation teams, community partners, and the individuals themselves. Our intention was to examine the effectiveness of this collaborative approach and identify areas where coordination and communication can be strengthened.

There are a number of recommendations arising from the review, but the key point is that the whole system is currently not meeting the needs of the Scottish Prison Service and is therefore in urgent need of re-evaluation and further investment.

It is our hope that this review will also contribute to the ongoing conversation surrounding prison reform and assist policymakers, practitioners, and advocates in shaping a more effective prisoner progression system. By promoting a system that prioritises rehabilitation, support, and successful reintegration, we can work towards a society that reduces crime, and ultimately creates safer communities for all.

I would like to thank those who conducted the review: Tom McMurchie (Lead Inspector for Thematic Reviews, HMIPS) Calum McCarthy (Inspector of Prisons, HMIPS) Debbie Campbell (Head of OLR, Risk Management Authority) Keith Gardner (Specialist Adviser, Community Justice Scotland) and Mike Hendry (Strategic Inspector, Care Inspectorate).

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, Wendy Sinclair-Gieben was appointed in July 2018.

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2. On publication the report can be found at www.prisoninspectorscotland.gov.uk
3. For further information please contact Kerry Love, Business Manager, at Kerry.Love@gov.scot or on 07939 980452.

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