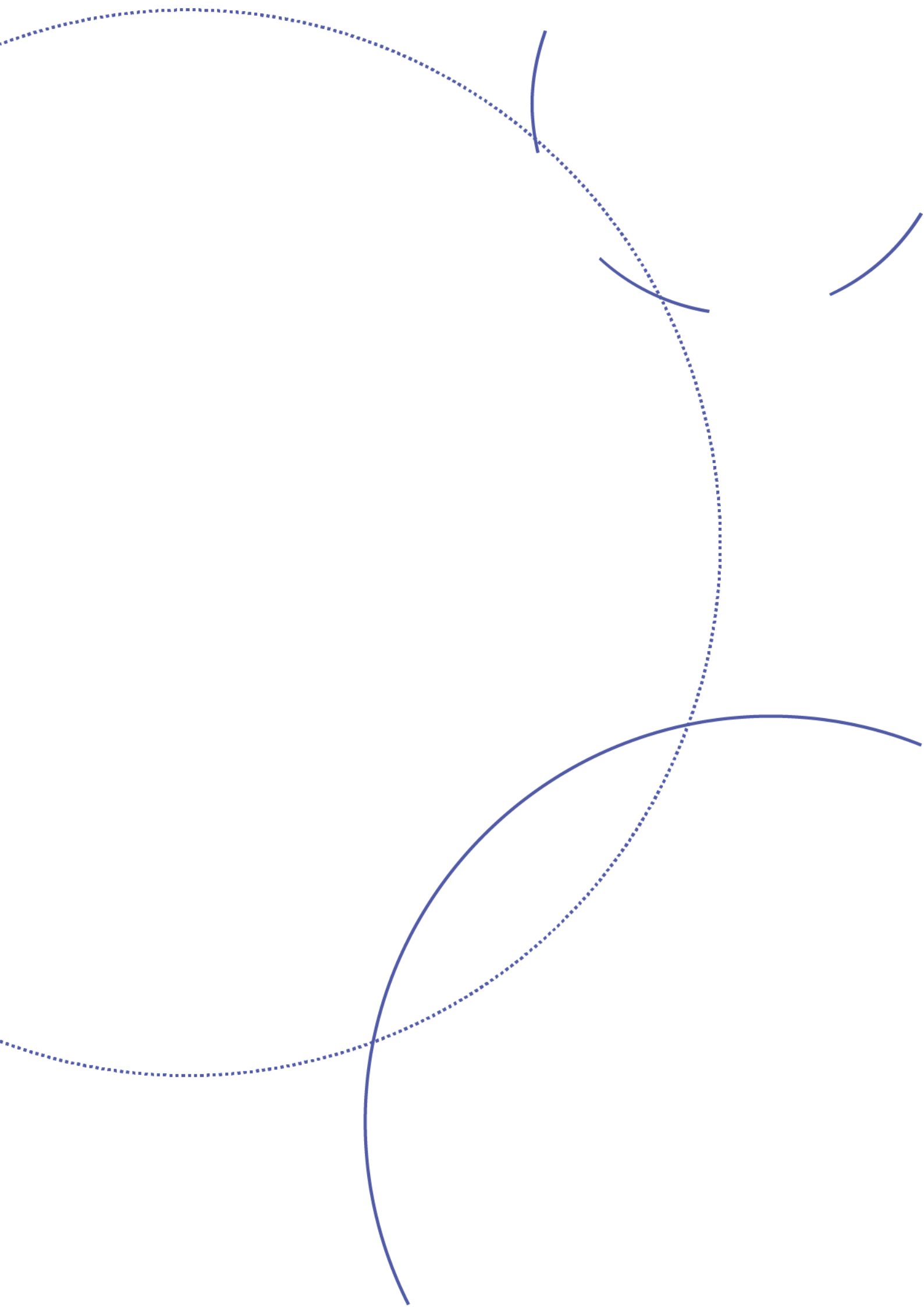


HMICS Custody Progress Inspection Report - Dumfries and Galloway

April 2024





HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) is established under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and has wide ranging powers to look into the ‘*state, effectiveness and efficiency*’ of both the Police Service of Scotland (Police Scotland) and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA).¹

HMICS has a statutory duty to inquire into the arrangements made by the Chief Constable and the SPA to meet their obligations in terms of best value and continuous improvement. If necessary, it can be directed by Scottish Ministers to inspect anything relating to the SPA or Police Scotland as they consider appropriate.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) is the national improvement agency for health and social care. It is responsible for supporting healthcare providers to deliver high quality care and scrutinising those services to provide public assurance about the quality and safety of that care.

Places of detention, including police custody centres within the UK, are monitored as part of the human rights treaty: ‘*Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT)*’. Joint HMICS/HIS custody inspections focus on the delivery of custody services by Police Scotland and associated healthcare provision by NHS boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships across Scotland and are underpinned by the joint HIS and HMICS Framework to Inspect² that ensures a consistent, objective and human rights-based approach to the collaborative work.







This inspection was undertaken by HMICS in terms of Section 74(2)(a) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and is laid before the Scottish Parliament in terms of Section 79(3) of the Act.

¹ Legislation, [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012](#), Chapter 11.

² HIS, [Framework to inspect healthcare provision within police custody centres](#), January 2024.



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Our inspection

In June 2023, a joint custody inspection was undertaken by HMICS and HIS in the Dumfries and Galloway region, focussing on primary custody centres in Dumfries and Stranraer. Findings from the inspection were published in November 2023 and can be viewed in the publications section of the HMICS [website](#).

During the inspection, HIS inspectors identified patient safety concerns regarding the storage, supply and administration of medicines within the custody facilities and communicated these concerns to Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). This was in accordance with an escalation protocol put in place by the scrutiny bodies to respond to concerns identified during a joint custody inspection.

As part of the escalation process, the HSCP were asked to undertake an immediate review of the issues identified and to submit an *'improvement action plan'* within two weeks of the date of the inspection. The HSCP action plan and supporting evidence was subsequently submitted and reviewed by inspectors, in collaboration with a subject matter expert in pharmacy. Thereafter, a request was made for an updated action plan to be provided in advance of a pre-arranged visit to the custody centres in order for inspectors to examine the extent to which progress had been made. The progress inspection took place on 30 November 2023. Inspectors were clear that the purpose of the visit was to focus on the healthcare improvement action plan, with an emphasis on medication management, and that it would not involve further inspection of custody centre operations by police custody staff.

This report details our findings from the progress inspection undertaken in Dumfries and Stranraer police custody centres and outlines our evaluation of the remedial measures undertaken by the HSCP in response to the concerns raised within the initial inspection report.

Craig Naylor

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

April 2024



Progress Inspection Recommendations

Progress inspection recommendation 1

Dumfries and Galloway HSCP, in discussion with the custody centre, should ensure that emergency medications that custody staff are trained to use are readily available to ensure prompt administration.

Progress inspection recommendation 2

Dumfries and Galloway HSCP should ensure that temperature sensitive medications are stored correctly in the custody centre in Stranraer.



How we carried out the inspection

1. We provided the Dumfries and Galloway HSCP with advance notice of our planned visit to the custody centres and highlighted that the following recommendations, drawn from the joint custody inspection report published in November 2023, would form the basis for the progress inspection and subsequent report:
 - Dumfries and Galloway HSCP must review the process for storage, dispensing and administration of medicines to support the safety and wellbeing of staff and to ensure patient safety
 - Dumfries and Galloway HSCP must ensure that there are clear processes in place for managing medicines and that healthcare staff use these to safely prescribe, administer, record and store medicines
 - Dumfries and Galloway HSCP must obtain a controlled drugs licence to meet its legal obligation in the storing and supply of controlled drugs.
2. The progress inspection was undertaken on 30 November 2023. Inspectors from HIS and HMICS visited both Dumfries and Stranraer custody centres on the same day.
3. During our visit to the custody centres, inspectors, and the pharmacy subject matter expert, spoke with members of staff providing healthcare within the facilities and reviewed the care environment in relation to the management and storage of medications. Following the onsite visit, a teleconference was arranged with relevant healthcare staff to further inform our findings.



Progress inspection findings

4. Having re-visited the custody centres, spoken with healthcare staff, made observations, and examined the progress made in respect of the improvement action plan provided by the HSCP, inspectors consider that Dumfries and Galloway HSCP has successfully addressed the first two recommendations, as noted above. The HSCP has implemented new protocols that have introduced robust systems and processes which better support the safe and effective use of medicines at the custody centres.
5. In respect of the third recommendation, we confirmed that Dumfries and Galloway HSCP were undertaking the necessary steps to obtain a controlled drugs licence.
6. A corresponding recommendation, highlighted within the November 2023 inspection report regarding the provision of training for custody staff in relation to medicine administration,³ remains with Police Scotland. This was not followed up as part of this progress inspection, however it is seen as an integral part of the overall approach to ensuring the safe and effective provision of medication to people in custody at the centres.

³ **Recommendation 11:** Police Scotland should ensure that custody staff are provided with appropriate training in relation to the administration of medication and that this is provided and refreshed in accordance with national guidance.



New recommendations

7. During our progress inspection visit, inspectors made the following observations from which they identified good practice and additional opportunities for improvement to the safe and effective use of medicines within the custody centres. This has resulted in the creation of two additional recommendations as noted below.
8. Inspectors observed that the keys to the treatment room in both custody centres were managed by the custody sergeant to help ensure that only appropriate staff had access. The treatment rooms were tidy with no visible unsecured medications. Medication disposal bins were also in place. Both treatment rooms contained two drug cupboards, one for storing stock drugs and the other for storing controlled drugs. Keys for these cupboards were held in key safes, only accessible by healthcare staff using a code. All of which we consider to be good practice.
9. Stranraer custody centre had a drug cupboard in the duty room that could be accessed by custody staff and contained ‘*over the counter*’ and emergency medications such as paracetamol and naloxone.⁴ This cupboard was also used to store detainee compliance aids.⁵ It was also positive to note that detainees’ Opiate Substitution Therapy (OST) was kept securely with the detainee’s belongings until it was required.
10. Dumfries custody centre had two drug cupboards, one for ‘*over the counter*’ medications such as paracetamol, and the other for detainees’ OST and compliance aids. The drug cupboards were located in a corridor near the charge bar. Inspectors discussed with custody staff the appropriateness of keeping OST in this area and suggested that storage in the secure treatment room cupboard may be preferable. This topic was also discussed during a follow up teleconference with representatives from the HSCP. Inspectors were assured by pharmacy staff from the HSCP that this cupboard was only used as temporary storage for OST when detainees first arrived at the custody centre. Once the detainee had been processed, their OST would then be moved to the cupboard in the treatment room and an appropriate entry made in the controlled drugs register when the Forensic Medical Examiner (FME) or community nursing staff visited the health centre.

⁴ Naloxone is an emergency antidote to overdoses as a result of heroin (or other opioid/opiate) use, which reverses the suppression of the respiratory system.

⁵ Royal Pharmaceutical Society, [Multi-compartment compliance aids \(MCAs\)](#), September 2022.



11. HIS inspectors were told by custody staff at Dumfries that some emergency drugs were kept in the treatment room. Inspectors highlighted that emergency drugs that custody staff were trained to administer should be easily accessible and suggested that they could be stored in the '*over the counter*' drug cupboard, which custody staff could readily access. Inspectors discussed the matter with representatives from the HSCP during the follow up teleconference at which we were informed that '*over the counter*' and emergency medications available to custody staff, were managed in accordance with draft guidance developed by the National Police Care Network.

Progress Inspection Recommendation 1

Dumfries and Galloway HSCP, in discussion with the custody centre, should ensure that emergency medications that custody staff are trained to use are readily available to ensure prompt administration.

12. Inspectors observed that clear processes were in place for obtaining, storing and administering detainees' OST. In Stranraer, OST was administered in the local hospital emergency department at weekends or by the local substance use team during the week. The FME administered OST in Dumfries.
13. Compliance aids were used to support the administration of prescribed medications to detainees by custody staff. The compliance aids were made up by community nurses based on written instruction provided by the FME. We spoke with a community nurse who was able to describe their role, responsibilities, and the process in relation to making up compliance aids. They also provided a good description of the type of information that they would document on the compliance aid.
14. Custody staff described compliance aids as being clearly labelled with clear instructions for administration. Custody staff also received electronic information regarding medications and administration instructions from the FME, which they copied directly across to the Police Scotland national custody system.



15. Custody staff described the process relating to the management of stock drugs which, when delivered to the custody centre, were securely locked in the treatment room until a member of the healthcare team visited. The drugs would thereafter be stored in secure cupboards by a member of healthcare staff. Inspectors saw evidence of stock management and stock checks being undertaken appropriately.
16. A dedicated drug fridge was available in the Dumfries custody centre, and we saw evidence of temperature checks being carried out. There was no dedicated drug fridge at the Stranraer custody centre, and temperature sensitive medications were being stored in a food fridge within the duty room. Again, this anomaly was discussed during the aforementioned teleconference with representatives from the HSCP.

Progress Inspection Recommendation 2

Dumfries and Galloway HSCP should ensure that temperature sensitive medications are stored correctly in the custody centre in Stranraer.

17. Folders containing policies and procedures for the safe and effective use of medicines were available in both custody centres. However, a standard operating procedure containing instructional images to guide healthcare staff when making up compliance aids was only available at Dumfries and not at the Stranraer custody centre. Inspectors were assured that steps would be taken to ensure that all relevant policies and procedures would be available to staff attending both custody centres.
18. Inspectors were encouraged to observe that police custody staff were familiar with the new procedures introduced following our escalation of concerns emerging from the June 2023 inspection. Similarly, the community nurse we met with was aware that there was a '*named person*' responsible for drug stock management.



Next steps

19. The new recommendations featured within this report have been communicated by HIS inspectors to the Dumfries and Galloway HSCP and Police Scotland. These will subsequently be subject to future follow up and review by HIS, plans for which will be communicated to the HSCP directly.

20. Inspectors have been informed that the HSCP submitted an application to the Home Office for a controlled drugs licence in January 2024. Given the processes involved, it will take some time for the application to be approved. HIS will continue to monitor progress to ensure that the appropriate licence is in place.



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About His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

HMICS operates independently of Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and the Scottish Government. Under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, our role is to review the state, effectiveness and efficiency of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. We support improvement in policing by carrying out inspections, making recommendations and highlighting effective practice.

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