



**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland**  
Improving Policing across Scotland

Thursday, 20th April, 2023

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **HMICS Custody Inspection – Lanarkshire**

Police custody centres in Lanarkshire are managed by capable and professional staff who would benefit from specialist training to help them better understand the complex issues and challenges experienced by those in their care.

A report published today Thursday, 20th April, 2023, found the risks and vulnerabilities associated with individual detainees were properly assessed but identified some areas for improvement in the healthcare available to them within the facilities.

The joint inspection by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) and Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) assessed the treatment of, and conditions for, individuals detained in the primary police custody centres serving Lanarkshire, of Motherwell and Coatbridge.

It was the first of two onsite inspections which will inform planning for future joint inspections.

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Craig Naylor said: “This report differs from previous ones on police custody as it is the first to provide a detailed analysis of the provision of healthcare in the custody centres and make recommendations for both Police Scotland and NHS Lanarkshire.

“We were concerned regarding gaps in the analysis of the quality of healthcare services provided to the custody centres, which would enable healthcare providers to fully understand the impact of the delivery of care for people in custody.”

The report highlighted the need for specialist staff training in relation to substance misuse, mental health, trauma informed care and on undertaking detainee observations. Detainees who had been prescribed methadone in the community had inconsistent access to a substitute treatment at either custody centre when required to appear at court from custody, and could go for an extended period of time without it.

The report also found that improvements were required in the practice relating to the carrying out and recording of cell checks.

Responsibility for the provision of healthcare services lies with NHS Lanarkshire which did not have the necessary controlled drugs licence to store and/or supply drugs in the facilities. The health authority had contracted the healthcare service at the custody centres to Custody and Offender Medical Service (COMS) which provided services to a number of custody sites across Scotland.

No healthcare practitioners were based at either Motherwell or Coatbridge but attended when required and as requested by custody staff. The inspection team were of the opinion that onsite healthcare would have the potential to reduce the number of people transferred from custody to hospital for assessment.

The majority of those detained at Motherwell and Coatbridge spend less than 12 hours in custody with 40% there for less than six hours. However those attending court via the virtual system, implemented as a result of the pandemic, could be in custody for longer as they awaited the administration of their release or transfer.

The report made 15 recommendations, five of which were applicable across the country and Police Scotland was advised to take them into account in improvement planning.

Police custody is a high risk area of policing business and, as such, has been subject to considerable scrutiny by HMICS since Police Scotland was established with 10 reports published. These reports remain relevant as Police Scotland continues to address recommendations made. The service has made considerable progress with implementing previous recommendations and improvement actions in respect of custody services.

**Ends**

## **Notes**

This inspection was unannounced and involved the analysis of a sample of custody records relating to 46 people detained at the custody centres.

The centres at Motherwell and Coatbridge are permanently staffed, open to receive detainees at any time and are based within the police stations in the respective towns.

This inspection contributed 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 a NPM, an independent body or group of bodies which monitor detainee treatment and conditions. HMICS is one of several bodies making up the NPM in the UK.

## **Ends notes**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

The HMICS Lanarkshire Custody Inspection Report will be available for download on the HMICS website [www.hmic.org](http://www.hmic.org) from 1100 hrs on Thursday, 20th April, 2023.

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## **Ends**