

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

Police Scotland's Custody Provision

Written submission from HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

In advance of the Committee's next meeting at which it will hear evidence regarding Police Scotland's custody provision, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to a recent inspection report on custody published by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland – [Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Inspection of custody centres located in Tayside Division](#). Published in January 2018, this inspection was linked to our inspection of local policing in Tayside Division and involved visits to three custody centres in the area (Arbroath, Dundee and Perth).

Police Scotland's custody provision will also feature in our Scrutiny Plan for 2018-19, which will be published shortly. In Spring 2018, we intend to carry out a series of inspections of custody centres across Scotland. These inspections will focus on treatment and conditions in custody and will help meet our obligations as a member of the UK's National Preventive Mechanism, a group of organisations designated under OPCAT¹ to carry out regular and independent monitoring of places of detention. These inspections will also generate key lines of enquiry to be explored further in a strategic inspection of custody to be undertaken later in 2018. This second inspection will involve HMICS assessing the strategic direction for the future delivery of Police Scotland's custody arrangements including consideration of issues such as leadership and governance, resources, people and partnership working. Each inspection will result in a published report and will follow up on outstanding recommendations from the six custody inspection reports published by HMICS since the creation of Police Scotland. Taken together, the two inspections will be equivalent to our [Thematic inspection of police custody arrangements](#), published in 2014.

We also intend to carry out a local policing inspection of Greater Glasgow Division in 2018-19 and, in keeping with our usual methodology, this will also include an assessment of custody centres located in the division. The custody element of this inspection will likely take place in early 2019.

As the Committee will be aware, the health care needs of those held in police custody can often be significant and complex. HMICS is currently working with Healthcare Improvement Scotland with the aim of developing a joint custody inspection programme so that the delivery of health care in police custody can be assessed.

Gill Imery
HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary
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¹ The UN Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) requires all States Parties, including the UK, to designate a National Preventive Mechanism to ensure all places of detention are regularly and independently monitored.