



Item No. 17

Meeting Date Wednesday 10th September 2025

**Glasgow City
Integration Joint Board
Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

Report By: Karen Lockhart, Interim Assistant Chief Officer, Adult Services

Contact: Rhoda Macleod, Head of Adult Services (Sexual Health, Police Custody & Prison Healthcare)

Phone: 0141 211 8178

**Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) Inspection
of Prison Healthcare Service in HMP Barlinnie**

Purpose of Report:	To advise IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the outcome of formal inspection activity within Prison Healthcare in 2024; and ongoing work to ensure improved and sustained performance.
---------------------------	---

Background/Engagement:	Previous reports have been presented to the IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 18 th October 2017 and 14 th April 2021 regarding HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland inspections of the healthcare service in HMP Barlinnie (2016 and 2019).
-------------------------------	--

Governance Route:	<p>The matters contained within this paper have been previously considered by the following group(s) as part of its development.</p> <p>HSCP Senior Management Team <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Council Corporate Management Team <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Health Board Corporate Management Team <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Council Committee <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Update requested by IJB <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not Applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
--------------------------	---

Recommendations:	<p>The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:</p> <p>a) Note the findings of the most recent inspection activity; and</p> <p>b) Note an action plan has been developed to ensure ongoing sustainable service improvement.</p>
-------------------------	---

OFFICIAL

Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:

Prison Healthcare Services assist in supporting vulnerable people and promoting health and social wellbeing.

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome:

People who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected.

Health and social care services contribute to reducing health inequalities.

Personnel:

N/A

Carers:

N/A

Provider Organisations:

N/A

Equalities:

The aim of the transfer of healthcare responsibilities from the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to NHS is to ensure the equivalence of healthcare provision for the prison population.

Fairer Scotland Compliance:

N/A

Financial:

N/A

Legal:

N/A

Economic Impact:

N/A

Sustainability:

N/A

Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:

N/A

Risk Implications:

The need to ensure continuous improvement in the context of the challenging financial climate. Prison healthcare operates within the confinements of the prison setting, which is controlled by SPS, and this can impact on service delivery. Close and productive partnership working is required to ensure positive patient outcomes.

Implications for Glasgow City Council:

N/A

Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:

Evidence of ongoing and sustained service improvement

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the outcome of formal inspection activity within prison healthcare in 2024; and ongoing work to ensure improved and sustained performance.

2. Background

- 2.1. Across NHSGGC, Glasgow City HSCP has hosting responsibilities for healthcare provision in the following establishments:

Prison	Population *
HMP Barlinnie	1,412
HMP Low Moss	824
HMP Greenock	222
HMIP&YOI Lillias	17
Total	2,475

*As of 12th August 2025

- 2.2 His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland (HMCIPS) assesses the treatment and care of prisoners across the Scottish Prison Service estate against a pre-defined set of Inspecting and Monitoring Standards which were reviewed and updated in May 2018. This process is supported by inspectors from Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS), Education Scotland, Scottish Human Rights Commission and The Care Inspectorate.
- 2.3 HIS are responsible for inspecting the Prison Healthcare Service against Standard 9: Health & Wellbeing which comprises of 17 Quality Indicators.
- 2.4 Since the last report was presented to this Committee in April 2021, there has been one formal inspection of HMP Low Moss in February 2022, one formal inspection of HMP Greenock in March 2023, and one formal inspection of HMP Barlinnie in November 2024. A further formal inspection of HMP Low Moss is due to take place in August 2025.

3. Formal Inspection of HMP Barlinnie 18th – 22nd November 2024

- 3.1 The inspection took place in November 2024 although the full draft report did not become formally available until April 2025. A full copy of the inspection report can be found at the following link:

[Report of full inspection of HMP Barlinnie - November 2024 | HMIPS](#)

- 3.2 Out of a possible 16 quality indicators relevant to the male estate under Standard 9 (Health and Wellbeing), the service received the following ratings:

- 4 GOOD
- 4 SATISFACTORY
- 7 GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE
- 1 POOR

- 3.3 The Healthcare service received an overall 'Generally Acceptable' rating. In total, 19 recommendations for further improvement were made in the report, while 10 areas of good practice were highlighted and commended.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

- 3.4 The previous inspection of HMP Barlinnie had resulted in an overall 'Poor' rating, partially due to the adverse conditions that staff were delivering a service in. In 2024, the inspection team noted that there had been a substantial improvement in the condition of the healthcare facilities which had improved the environment, making it fit for purpose to deliver healthcare services, and also has had a positive impact for both patients and healthcare staff in the prison.
- 3.5 While inspectors recognised that the overall patient experience at HMP Barlinnie was generally positive, the inspection identified several areas for improvement, including unmet recommendations since the last inspection. There is continued concern that the national issue of variations in the performance of the prisoner transport provider continues to result in patients missing appointments and having to have their secondary care appointments rescheduled. This is a national issue and had been previously escalated by HMIPS to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs.
- 3.6 During the previous inspection of HMP Barlinnie in 2019, inspectors recommended that healthcare staff and SPS work together to improve escorts for patients to attend appointments in the Health Centre. The 2024 Inspection report noted that there were still ongoing challenges with SPS escorts within the prison which results in a number of patients missing their appointments and healthcare staff time was not being utilised to its full potential. NHSGGC Prison Healthcare management have recently presented this issue for advice and further discussion to HSCP Senior Management in Glasgow City and East Dunbartonshire (where Oral Health is hosted).
- 3.7 Unfortunately the service lost its GP Clinical Lead suddenly in June 2024. Since then, all attempts to fill this vacancy have been unsuccessful. Additionally, the service has found it difficult to recruit salaried GP posts and now completely relies on agency medical staff provision. The Inspection report highlights concerns regarding the lack of clinical leadership across the healthcare service and the ongoing fragility of medical / GP provision. The sustainability of GP sessions being delivered by agency staff is being partially addressed with the introduction of Advanced Nurse Practitioners, but the provision of a safe and sustainable service remains a high priority.
- 3.8 The inspection team commended the health care staff and teams supporting person-centred and compassionate care, delivering care with a high degree of professionalism and commitment, and a good understanding of the human rights approach and the importance of inequality-sensitive practice. The introduction of the professional nurse lead role and the inclusion of the HSCPs wider Senior Nursing Team to lead and direct the strategic professional and clinical development of nurses in the Glasgow prisons was seen as a positive development for staff. All staff spoken with by the inspection team described feeling well supported by senior managers.
- 3.9 In the mental health team there are robust systems and processes in place to monitor referrals and triage. Referrals are responded to within appropriate timescales depending on the level of risk and the patient's presentation. The inspection team noted that this is equitable to community provision.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

- 3.10 The report highlighted that the Addiction Team presented as a cohesive and focused team that was working hard to recover from a period of significant staffing shortages. A range of harm reduction and psychological interventions and treatments are provided to patients who had substance use issues in the prison. The team is working towards implementation of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) standards.

4. HMP Barlinnie Inspection Action Plan

- 4.1 As part of the Inspection process and following publication of the full report, HIS requested that NHS GGC Prison Healthcare submit an Action Plan outlining improvements planned/achieved against the recommendations. An Action Plan responding to the 19 recommendations for prison healthcare was drawn up with specific and measurable improvement actions and submitted to HIS in July 2025.
- 4.2 On 23rd July 2025, the Inspection Team confirmed that they had reviewed the action plan and were content with how the recommendations have been addressed and the progress made to date. They will not be requesting any further information or planning any follow-up engagement at this stage. Progress on the Action Plan will be monitored by the Prison Healthcare Management Team on an ongoing basis.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny is asked to:
- a) Note the findings of the most recent inspection activity; and
 - b) Note an action plan has been developed to ensure ongoing sustainable service improvement.