



HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland
Improving Policing across Scotland

Thursday, May 30, 2019

PRESS RELEASE

HMICS Publishes Progress Review on HDC

Good progress has been made by Police Scotland and the Scottish Government towards meeting recommendations to improve the police response to breaches of Home Detention Curfew.

In an update report published today (Thursday, May 30), HM Inspectorate of Constabulary notes that both organisations are treating the work as a priority and are on track to complete all the recommendations within a reasonable time frame.

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice requested this progress report be provided six months after the publication of the HMICS independent assessment of Police Scotland's response to a home detention curfew. That strategic review had been called for following the murder of Craig McClelland by an offender who was unlawfully at large after breaching his home detention curfew. It contained 16 recommendations covering operational processes and the strategic direction and guidance on the future management of offenders in Scotland.

HM Chief Inspector Gill Imery QPM, repeated her sincere condolences to the family of Mr McClelland, and said: "We are satisfied that eight of our recommendations have been fully met and are suitable for closure. As far as the remaining eight are concerned, we recognise, that while good progress has been made, more time is needed to fully satisfy all the requirements."

This update looked at offenders released on home detention curfew from November 1, 2018 to March 29, 2019, those recalled for a breach of their release conditions during that time and the handful of people who are still regarded as unlawfully at large from the initial HMICS review.

Mrs Imery pointed out that, since the 2018 HMICS review, the number released on home detention curfew has reduced from around 300 at any one time, to 60. "This raises questions about the risk assessment element of decision making by the Scottish Prison Service. And it is fair to say the level of breaches has dropped due to the fact fewer offenders are being released on home detention curfew. However it is also clear from speaking with officers and staff at various ranks and grades within Police Scotland that a home detention curfew recall notice is a priority", she said.

In each case where an individual was deemed to be unlawfully at large, HMICS found that Police Scotland had carried out a professional level of inquiry in their efforts to trace and return him/her to prison. There was also evidence of improved communication and information sharing between Police Scotland and the Scottish Prison Service.

Some of the HMICS recommendations cannot be progressed until the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Bill completes its legislative passage through the Scottish Parliament. The Bill will include a new offence of being unlawfully at large and clarify existing police powers. The report published today looks at each of the original 16 recommendations, assesses the progress made in completing them and any further work required.

HMICS will continue to monitor the outstanding recommendations.

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

In June 2018, James Wright was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Craig McClelland, a crime he had committed while 'unlawfully at large' having breached his Home Detention Curfew.

James Wright breached his Home Detention Curfew 10 days after his release from Low Moss Prison where he had been serving a 21 month sentence for a knife related crime.

In addition to directing HMICS to carry out a review of Police Scotland's role in Home Detention Curfew, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice sought a similar assessment from HM Inspectorate of Prisons in Scotland (HMIPS) in relation to the Scottish Prison Service. HMIPS will publish a progress report today.

The HMICS Independent assessment of Police Scotland's response to a breach of Home Detention Curfew - progress review is available to download at the HMICS website www.hmics.scot from 1400hrs, Thursday, 30 May, 2019.

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