



Behind Closed Doors: The State of Detention in Scotland

March 2026

1. EVENT SUMMARY

- 1.1. On 6 March 2026, the Scotland Subgroup of the UK National Preventive Mechanism (UK NPM) hosted a panel and roundtable event to discuss the state of detention in Scotland.
- 1.2. Participants from across the criminal justice sector were welcomed, providing wide-ranging perspectives on devolved detention settings in Scotland, including from scrutiny, policing, prisons, health, human rights, academics and lived experience.
- 1.3. In his opening remarks Martin Kettle, Interim Head of the UK NPM Secretariat, outlined the NPM's role in preventing torture and ill-treatment of people deprived of their liberty, including in prisons, police custody, court custody, secure mental health settings, secure accommodation services for children and young people, and health and social care settings.
- 1.4. Prof Angela O'Hagan, Chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission and outgoing Chair of the UK NPM Scotland Subgroup, then delivered an opening provocation. This summarised the Scotland Subgroup's concerns, including prison overcrowding, poor treatment and conditions of detention, staffing issues, high levels of death in detention, lack of mandatory Article 2 investigation of all deaths in detention, recommendations not being implemented by duty bearers, limited and inconsistent data recording, sharing and analysis.
- 1.5. Audrey Nicoll, MSP and Convenor of the Criminal Justice Committee, then Chaired a panel of speakers from the UK NPM, with responses from external contributors and event participants.¹
- 1.6. The discussion centred around identifying **systemic issues** in places where people are deprived of their liberty in Scotland, their impact, the barriers preventing their resolution, and what needs to be done to address them.
- 1.7. **Sections 2 and 3 below summarise the emergent issues and themes from the discussion.**
- 1.8. Closing remarks were delivered by Rosemary Agnew, Commissioner at the Scottish Human Rights Commission and incoming Chair of the UK NPM Scotland Subgroup. Ms Agnew highlighted the importance of continued joined up working to create measurable impact on the identified issues.

¹ See [Appendix 1](#) for a list of panellists, external contributors and event participants.

2. SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES IN DETENTION SETTINGS

Across all settings

- 2.1. **Staffing challenges** Staff shortages, high turnover and consequent lack of experienced staff are negatively impacting on the care and treatment of people deprived of their liberty. In 2025, the Care Inspectorate required one secure accommodation setting for young people to stop receiving new admissions until it could establish an appropriately skilled staff complement that could offer necessary care. In mental health settings, a common complaint from patients is that there are not enough staff and consequently staff are often too busy to engage meaningfully with them.
- 2.2. **Physical nature of the custody estate** Aging and deterioration or unsuitability of several prisons and police custody centres is leading to facilities no longer being fit for purpose. It was recognised that improving material conditions takes investment, and that decommissioning facilities (whether individual cells, halls, or entire establishments) can increase pressure on staff and detainees, and affect their daily experiences. It may also be leading to breaches of their human rights. Scotland has made significant investments in detention infrastructure, but there are still too many people living in unacceptable physical conditions.
- 2.3. **Data** Findings have identified shortcomings across all settings in recording, sharing, analysing and publishing data. For example, in police custody centres, records of care and welfare activities are often incomplete, meaning that inspectors and monitors cannot confirm that detained people are receiving their entitlements.
- 2.4. **Human rights** Potential violations across multiple settings. For example: some people with learning disabilities and autism continue to be kept in hospital despite no longer receiving any therapeutic benefit, which is generally accepted to be a rights violation; human rights of children in police custody centres; and long-term use of separation and reintegration units (SRUs) in prisons.
- 2.5. **Access to justice** Significant barriers for people deprived of their liberty. For example, people with severe disabilities living in hospital face major barriers to engaging in legal processes, and it is difficult for people with convictions to find legal representation to bring cases before the courts.
- 2.6. **Complaints systems** Inadequate, inaccessible, or mistrusted. For example, people fearing reprisal and negative repercussions. One speaker noted that, in prisons, speaking to inspectors or monitors can lead to being labelled as an informant and might engender reprisal, making it risky to raise concerns even to scrutiny bodies.

Prisons

- 2.7. **Overpopulation and overcrowding** in Scottish prisons affect virtually all aspects of prison life. The prison population continues to rise despite early-release initiatives. More than half of Scottish prisons are accommodating more people than their design capacity, stretching staff and facilities. Thousands of people each year live two-to-a-cell in cells designed for one. This is leading to reduced access to; services, purposeful activity, progression programmes and meaningful human contact. Staff have less time to build relationships with people in prison. The overall impact is increased feelings of hopelessness, violence, substance use, and deaths in custody. Overcrowding has also led to breaches of international standards e.g. remanded prisoners sharing cells with convicted prisoners.
- 2.8. **Complexity of the prison population** The Scottish prison population is aging, individuals are presenting with greater complexity of needs, and high number of people have a history of involvement in organised crime. Past research has also revealed a disproportionate representation of people with neurodivergence among those convicted of sexual offences.² This complexity creates the need for increased support and supervision, further compounding the challenges of overpopulation.
- 2.9. **Deaths in custody** in Scottish prisons have reached record highs in the past two years. In the final quarter of 2024, twenty-one people died in prison custody, compared to twenty-four individuals who died in prison custody in all of 2015. This included the highest number of completed suicides on record.
- 2.10. **Transportation issues** are leading to missed healthcare and court appointments, and disrupting attendance at seriously ill family bedsides and funerals.
- 2.11. **Segregation** An increasing number of people are being held in segregation with some living in segregated for long periods of time. Many segregated prisoners struggle to cope in prison halls, but there is nowhere else for them to go. Data on the full duration any individual is held in segregation is not readily available, as individuals in SRUs are often moved from one prison establishment to another, while the data on SRU stays is recorded at individual prisons and not compiled centrally.
- 2.12. **Access to medication and specialist health treatment** Barriers to timely access to prescription drugs and healthcare remain a concern across detention settings. A story was shared of an individual with diabetes who required daily dialysis, but was unable to access this treatment in prison.
- 2.13. **Concerns about racial violence and Islamophobia** are rising, particularly at HMP Barlinnie and HMP Low Moss, including complaints of discrimination and

² It was noted, however, that there is a lack of up-to-date data on neurodivergence in the Scottish prison population, and that the data cited was more than ten years old.

reprisals against protected prisoners when making request to improve conditions (e.g. asking for unsuitable mattresses to be replaced).

- 2.14. **Prison data** Stakeholders highlighted that data collection is inconsistent across (and between) establishments and is not centrally collated to facilitate sharing and analysis. For example (in addition to decentralised SRU data), data on the number of people across the prison estate on MORs (management of offenders at risk because of any substance) is not easily accessible.

Police custody

- 2.15. **Understaffing** in Scottish Police custody centres is negatively affecting detainees' welfare, access to rights and entitlements, and operational activities. For example, a recurring finding in inspection and monitoring reports is that care and welfare activities are not consistently recorded, meaning that scrutiny bodies cannot be assured that people are receiving entitlements such as phone calls, showers and personal hygiene equipment.
- 2.16. **Referrals to services** are not being made from police custody centres often enough. One speaker expressed that every person who enters police custody has the potential to benefit from a referral to a public service to help address their offending behaviour. Statistics were shared which showed that many people entering police custody are vulnerable and would likely benefit from referrals to relevant services. There is a potential link between understaffing and lower than expected levels of data recording and referrals.
- 2.17. **Children under 18** are still being held in police custody centres, despite recognition that they are not an appropriate setting for children. This is due to the lack of an alternative, appropriate setting in Scotland.
- 2.18. **Duration of stay** Inspectors identified that children and adults are frequently being held in police custody for longer than is absolutely necessary, and for durations not commensurate with the seriousness of the alleged offences. While good practice was also recognised – including children not being put in cells and the presence of social workers with children – ensuring consistent good practice across all custody centres remains a challenge.
- 2.19. **Police Scotland's National Custody System (NCS)** does not collect data in a way that is easily exportable for sharing, publication or analysis. This limits transparency, information sharing, evidence-based decision-making, and the ability to monitor trends and track changes and outcomes.
- 2.20. **Properly sized anti-harm clothing** is often unavailable in police custody centres, raising concerns about dignity.

Secure mental health settings

- 2.21. **Lack of mandatory investigation of deaths in mental health settings** in Scotland, despite this being a requirement under the right to life (Article 2). This shortcoming has been acknowledged since at least the Cullen Review (2009) but remains unremedied.
- 2.22. **Data** on transfer times from prison to secure inpatient mental health care is limited, only measuring specific parts of the transfer journey, which makes it difficult to understand the true timelines for people to access care.
- 2.23. **Staffing challenges** are affecting patients' treatment. Force and restrictive practices are being used too often in some establishments, particularly where a high proportion of staff are new or inexperienced. Inspection findings show that people living in secure mental health settings have reported that there are often too few staff to enable the building of supportive relationships with patients.

Secure accommodation services

- 2.24. **Staffing challenges** have also affected secure accommodation services (SAS) in Scotland. As described above, one setting experienced significant staffing challenges which led to serious concerns about the care and welfare of the children living there, including unnecessary use of force and restraint, and the need to rely on police intervention in at least one case. SAS capacity has also been an area of concern, with some young people placed in alternative settings due to a lack of suitable beds.

Health and Social Care

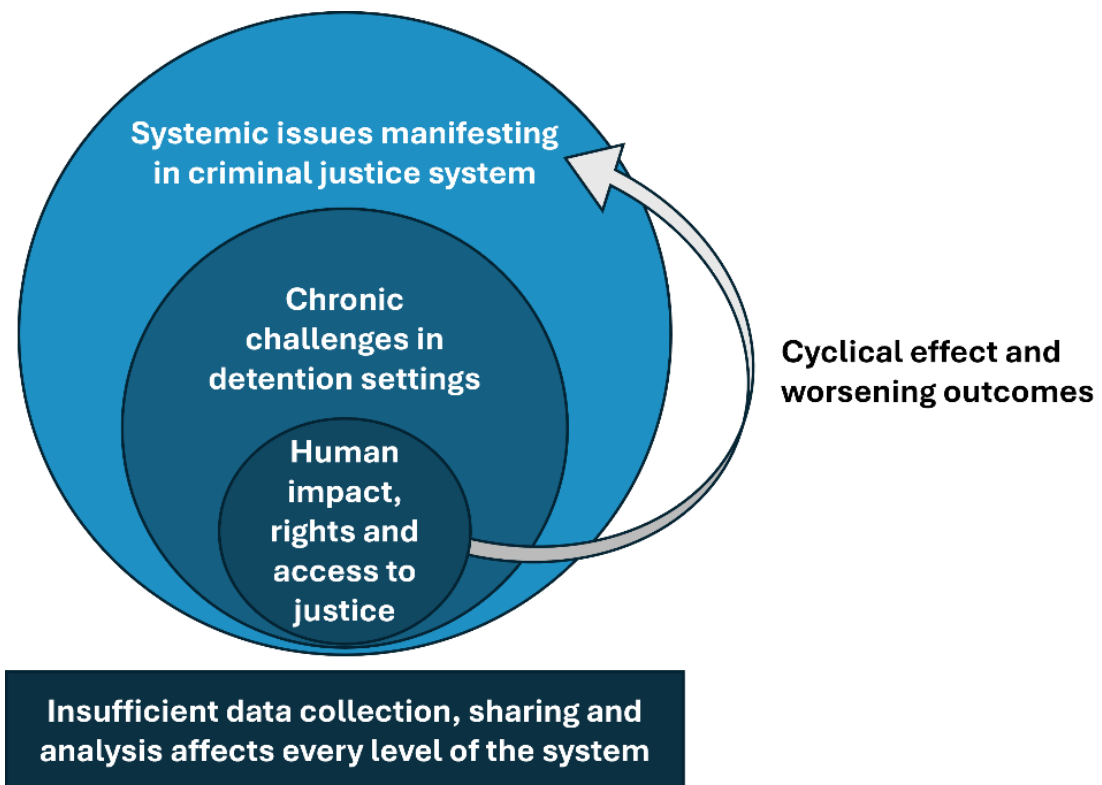
- 2.25. **Indeterminate deprivation of liberty** The treatment and living conditions of people deprived of their liberty in health and social care settings fall under the National Preventive Mechanism's mandate. In these settings, human rights concerns were raised regarding people with learning disabilities and autistic people being kept in hospital, sometimes for many years, despite there being no therapeutic benefit, likely violating their right to live independently and be included in the community.

3. KEY THEMES

3.1. Five key themes emerged from the discussion, highlighting the systemic and interconnected nature of the issues. These themes are summarised in the following five sections, along with strategies raised in the discussion which could address them:

- Theme 1: Wider systemic issues manifesting in the criminal justice system
- Theme 2: Multiple chronic challenges in deprivation of liberty settings
- Theme 3: Human impact, potential human rights violations and limited access to justice
- Theme 4: Cyclical effect and worsening outcomes
- Theme 5: Inadequate data collection, sharing and analysis

Figure 1: Key themes from the roundtable discussion



4. Theme 1: Systemic issues manifesting in the criminal justice system

The challenge:

- 4.1. Systemic failings in Scotland, including poverty, unemployment, housing instability, educational disparities and insufficient health and mental health care (including treatment for substance use disorders) are manifesting in the criminal justice system³. These issues are complex, socially rooted and difficult to solve. Studies show that a disproportionate number of people in prisons have care experience, histories of neglect and abuse, mental and/or physical ill health, and come from areas of multiple deprivation. Many people in the criminal justice system have previously struggled to access or engage with adequate levels of support in the community.
- 4.2. Prisons, police custody centres and other detention settings have become “passive receivers”, with no inherent powers to address underlying causes of chronic overcrowding, complex populations, high levels of physical and mental ill-health, substance misuse, repeated reoffending, institutionalisation and more. Third sector organisations that are well-positioned to create impact are insufficiently funded, and sectors outside of justice, such as housing and employment services, are unable to sufficiently meet the needs of vulnerable people in the community.

What can be done?

- 4.3. Effective interventions are community-first, person-centred, trauma-responsive, rooted in citizenship, and aim to prevent individuals from ending up in the criminal justice system in the first place.
- 4.4. An effective approach must recognise that many of the solutions to challenges in detention settings lie in the period before people are deprived of their liberty, and their pathway following detention. Investment is needed in services, supports and preventative interventions, including those delivered by third sector organisations.
- 4.5. Greater accountability must be placed on those who have real power to make necessary systemic changes, such as Ministers who make spending decisions.
- 4.6. For those who end up in the criminal justice system, opportunities for referrals, health and mental health care, and rehabilitation must be consistently available and applied to a much greater extent across all detention settings.
- 4.7. Investment in community-based sentencing is needed to reduce reoffending and alleviate population pressure in prisons. Awareness raising of community-based alternatives to incarceration among the judiciary is critical to realising the

³ This was one of the conclusions of the [Final Report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Harms Caused by Substance Misuse in Scottish Prisons](#), which stated “The Committee considers the situation a systemic failure of health provision manifesting inside prisons, requiring a whole-system response across justice, health and community services.” P. 3.

benefits of community justice. More generally, awareness, faith and belief in non-custodial alternatives is needed to achieve a fairer and safer response to harm.

- 4.8. Continued work is needed to ensure sentences make sense and are meaningful. The justice system must incorporate an understanding of human development and ensure that incarceration plans consider a range of markers of progress.
- 4.9. A flexible, systemic approach is needed to address these entrenched, socially rooted issues. This approach does not seek to “solve” individual issues, but to realise measurable improvements in key areas which will support better outcomes across the wider system.
- 4.10. Systematic collection, analysis and sharing of data and intelligence is needed to drive improved decisions, outcomes and multiagency change.

5. Theme 2: Multiple chronic challenges in detention settings

The challenge:

- 5.1. Detention settings face multiple entrenched structural challenges, which have been repeatedly raised by scrutiny bodies, but which remain unresolved. Many settings experience chronic capacity and staffing pressures – affecting the care and welfare of detainees – and fail to consistently collect, analyse and share important data which can inform decision-making and measure outcomes.
- 5.2. Several prisons and policy custody centres have ageing infrastructure which is, in some instances, unsuitable for habitation. Prisons continue to grapple with chronic and rising overpopulation, an aging and increasingly complex population, rising levels of substance use and an upward trend in the number of people dying in custody. In secure mental health settings, the use of force and restrictive practices are both identified as concerns, and the practical response to insufficient staffing.
- 5.3. The lack of mandatory investigation of deaths in all detention settings is a significant gap in monitoring and meeting human rights obligations.
- 5.4. In secure accommodation services, staffing shortages in some establishments have led to serious issues with the treatment of children under 18.
- 5.5. There appears to be a general of acceptance of these conditions, which frequently fall far below human rights standards.

What can be done?

- 5.6. The panellists identified the need for political will and bravery to take necessary steps to enable long-term systemic change and ensure that an acceptable standard of treatment and conditions is maintained in all settings. This includes acting with urgency where treatment and conditions fall below human rights standards.

- 5.7. Investment is needed in staffing and services across detention settings. This comes with a caveat that a balance must be achieved, as increased funding to the criminal justice system can mean less funds available for early intervention in the community.
- 5.8. Allocating resources to the prompt implementation of recommendations from existing reports, reviews and FAI determinations, rather than initiating new reviews, will drive improved outcomes.⁴
- 5.9. Good practice sharing enables establishments to learn from others' successes and work collaboratively with subject-matter experts to address challenges. Tools such as the [UK NPM Reporting Dashboard](#) support real-time good practice sharing across the UK.
- 5.10. There is a need to continue to build on Scotland's impressive history of public engagement and interest in human rights, investment in physical infrastructure, and focus on women in custody (e.g. the [Scottish Prisons Assessment and Review of Outcomes for Women \(SPAROW\)](#) report).
- 5.11. Many of these issues are longstanding, complex, interrelated and difficult to solve. Rather than focusing on the complete resolution of these challenges, dedicated, consistent and evidence-based efforts can create *improvements* in outcomes, enabling wider positive impact in the long-term.
- 5.12. The collection of targeted data to measure the results of initiatives and longer-term trends and outcomes is important to enabling a positive trajectory.
- 5.13. Continue to develop career pathways for people working in detention settings.
- 5.14. Learning from past successes and good practice is crucial. For example, in policing, there has been a cultural shift towards safety, dignity and welfare, leading to increased police legitimacy and new practices including the increased use of naloxone, saving dozens of lives each year.
- 5.15. Seek to understand and remove barriers to good practice being replicated across establishments (supported by relevant, timely and accurate data).
- 5.16. Change does not come without significant investment and resources. It is important to explore both increased funding *and* whether existing funding is being used effectively.

⁴ Recent (2026) reports which have produced important recommendations relevant to these issues include the [inspection and monitoring reports of Scottish scrutiny bodies](#), the [Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission Review](#), the [Independent Fatal Accident Inquiry Review](#), and the [Parliamentary Inquiry into the Harms Caused by Substance Misuse in Prisons](#), several recent [Fatal Accident Inquiries](#), among others.

6. Theme 3: Human impact, potential human rights violations and limited access to justice

The challenge:

- 6.1. Scrutiny bodies frequently witness treatment and conditions which could amount to human rights violations, and which do not meet human rights obligations and international standards. While a positive human rights discourse exists in Scotland, there is a lack of clear, specific human rights standards that duty bearers are held accountable for implementing.
- 6.2. People deprived of their liberty face multiple barriers to accessing justice, including ineffective complaints systems, cultures of retaliation against whistleblowers and structural barriers to bringing cases before the courts, including prohibitive costs and system complexity, and difficulties finding legal representation for people with criminal convictions.

What can be done?

- 6.3. Scotland must move away from the *rhetoric* of human rights, towards embedding rights into practice. Ministers should therefore provide clear standards that duty bearers can understand and implement in operational practices.
- 6.4. Sustainable change will only be achievable when duty bearers can be held legally accountable in to meet their obligations. Strengthening the legislative basis for human rights in Scotland, and improving access to justice, are important steps towards this change.
- 6.5. Action is urgently needed to address issues of access to justice for people deprived of their liberty, many of whom are among Scotland's most vulnerable citizens. The establishment of a bank of legal representatives that detainees can contact for pro bono work, or access to timely legal aid would be a first step in supporting access to justice.
- 6.6. Duty bearers and scrutiny bodies must do more to understand and address the high numbers of vulnerable and neurodivergent individuals in places of detention. Up-to-date disaggregated data on vulnerable detainees is needed to support this work.
- 6.7. More must be done to involve individuals with lived experience in ways that are sensitive and safe.
- 6.8. A greater respect for the rights and dignity of all people, including people deprived of their liberty, must be fostered across all settings.
- 6.9. Politically-motivated rhetoric that reinforces the false dichotomy of victim and perpetrator must be rejected, in recognition that many perpetrators are also victims themselves in need of support. Almost every person who causes harm has experienced harm.

6.10. Likewise, there is a need for a cultural shift away from the idea that “justice equals punishment”, and away from the idea of “better prisons” towards fewer prison places, and the continued development and expansion of community justice options to help prevent institutionalisation, rights violations and reoffending.

7. Theme 4: Cyclical effect and worsening outcomes

The challenge:

- 7.1. Many people deprived of their liberty in Scotland will re-enter the community, often the one they were removed from. Research shows that people who have recently been liberated from prison are more vulnerable and continue to have an increased need for public services compared to people who have not been in prison. A recent study found that people released from prison use emergency services significantly more than those who have not been in prison⁵, highlighting the continued vulnerability of individuals following liberation.
- 7.2. Time spent in prison is a critical opportunity for rehabilitation, education and skill building to support reintegration into society. As discussed in Theme 2, Scottish prison regimes are limited due to staffing and resourcing challenges combined with increasingly large and complex prison populations. Limited regimes undermine rehabilitation and adversely affect people’s health and mental health, with many people spending 20 hours or more in cramped cells each day. This means many people may leave prison in worse physical and mental health, having experienced little rehabilitation.
- 7.3. Without full and rehabilitative prison regimes and adequate services and support in the community (as described in Theme 1), a cycle is created where vulnerable individuals continue to circulate in and out of the criminal justice system, reinforcing high demand on public services and the criminal justice system, and an elevated prison population.⁶ A plan to address this cycle is needed.

⁵ The study found that 24% of people released from prison had contact with the ambulance service for mental health and substance use in the four years following liberation, and 21% with A&E. Only 2% of the control group, who had not been in prison, had contact with these services during the same time period. Connell C, Kjellgren R, Savinc J, *et al*, [Health service contacts for mental health and substance use on release from prison: a retrospective population-based data linkage study](#), *BMJ Open* 2026;**16**:e107586. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2025-107586.

⁶ Sample records taken during police custody inspections show that most detained people have been in police custody before. Scotland’s early release programme, meant to ease untenable prison population pressures, has led to increased pressure on police resources as individuals have been liberated without the necessary preparation to live in the community. Meanwhile, the prison population has rapidly returned to its previous elevated levels shortly after each early release.

What can be done?

- 7.4. Listening to people with lived experience is crucial to understanding what supports are needed in the community and in detention settings and why, and what barriers exist to accessing them.
- 7.5. Panellists noted that every person detained is an opportunity for intervention or referral, and that each individual's story offers an opportunity to identify gaps and issues in public services and systems. A culture of empowerment, innovation and problem solving must be fostered in public services, so that systemic and individual issues can be rapidly identified and addressed, with fewer people falling through the cracks.
- 7.6. A systemic approach is necessary to shift from a cycle of decline to one where there is a positive trajectory of improving outcomes. This approach should develop and evaluate policies across detention settings *and* the community for their potential systemic impact, consider intangible contributing factors such as cultural forces, social dynamics, relationships and communication, and incorporate evidence-based knowledge of human development and rehabilitation.
- 7.7. Practice across all sectors must be humanised, recognising that there are real people affected by rhetoric, policies and actions, and acknowledging the realities of people in contact with the criminal justice system. For example, in policing, statistics show that one of the main reasons people miss court appearances is that they live a chaotic lifestyle. Missed court appearances lead to consequences which reinforce greater contact by vulnerable people with the criminal justice system, when what may be needed for that person is an intervention that addresses their individual circumstances.

8. *Theme 5: Inconsistent data collection, sharing and analysis*

The challenge:

- 8.1. Data gaps and limitations in data management systems continue to undermine accountability, treatment and conditions, and contribute to a justice deficit for people deprived of their liberty. Scrutiny bodies frequently raise concerns about incomplete data recording, and insufficient data collection, analysis and sharing. Inadequate data affects duty bearers' ability to make informed decisions, evaluate policies and initiatives, identify and rapidly respond to trends and improving (or declining) outcomes, and more. Shortcomings in data management systems can make data recording, analysis and sharing cumbersome, and hinder communication between settings and services. These communication delays have had catastrophic consequences, when information critical to an individual's welfare is not transmitted in time to ensure appropriate safeguards and continuity of care.

What can be done?

- 8.2. To enable transparency, analysis of trends and measurement of outcomes, improved data collection and publication are needed from government and delivery partners. Targeted, long-term data must be collected and published to enable the effective evaluation of policies and initiatives. For example, the UK NPM's work analysing data on deaths in prison custody revealed that 25% of deaths between 2015-2025 occurred within the first 12 weeks in prison. This information could be used to develop targeted, preventive policies and initiatives.
- 8.3. There is a need to collect and publish more useful (but not necessarily more complex or voluminous) data. To maximise usefulness of data, both "top-down" centralised data collection and "bottom-up", responsive data collection are needed. For example, if a request is made to a duty bearer for data which is not currently being collected centrally, a bottom-up approach would enable the flexibility to start routinely collecting that data if it was perceived to be useful and beneficial. A culture of flexibility and innovation based on changing circumstances, on-the-job learning and stakeholder feedback can enable the capture of more useful data to support data-driven decisions on key issues.
- 8.4. Good record keeping, accountability and innovation in data should be promoted and incentivised. Where useful data is currently being recorded, collected and published, incentive structures should be examined to help develop similar incentives for the consistent collection of other data.
- 8.5. While improved data collection is important, there must be a commitment to putting that data to productive use.
- 8.6. More robust internal audit and quality assurance systems are needed to promote consistency in implementing changes across time and multiple establishments.
- 8.7. More consistent progress reporting on the implementation of recommendations from inspection and monitoring reports, independent reviews, inquiries and FAI determinations can promote transparency and increased awareness of activities, enabling greater coordination of systemic efforts. The UK NPM has created a [Reporting Dashboard](#) to improve transparency and facilitate analysis of recommendations from the 21 NPM scrutiny bodies, and HMICS has created a [Recommendation Tracker](#) with a similar function.
- 8.8. Increased data collection and reporting on the outcomes of policies and activities will allow for course correction. Both qualitative and quantitative data can provide an evidentiary basis for outcomes. The SHRC and UK NPM have successfully used human rights measurement frameworks to evidence outcomes.

- 8.9. Scrutiny bodies must focus on writing effective, and potentially fewer, recommendations, addressed to specific duty bearers, to support the change process. HMIPS has implemented a “desired outcomes” format for recommendations, leaving it up to duty bearers to use their expertise to determine *how* to realise the outcome, holding them accountable for doing so. There is also a need to remain flexible and accept that there may be multiple ways to address a single issue.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1. The UK NPM’s State of Detention in Scotland event brought together voices from across the criminal justice sector to surface key issues, draw out themes, and identify strategies to stop the current cycle of decline. Ultimately, five interconnected themes emerged, each requiring action to support long-term systemic change.
- 9.2. Many levers, strategies and approaches were proposed during the roundtable discussion. There was broad agreement that political will and bravery, a systemic approach, and the effective use of data are critical to producing sustainable change and improving treatment and conditions in Scotland’s detention settings. Failure to resolutely address these issues presents a very real risk of crises in prison population, the health and mental health of vulnerable populations, substance use, deaths in detention, demands on police resources and public services, and many other areas.

APPENDIX 1: EVENT DETAILS

Hosts

- Martin Kettle, Interim Head of the UK NPM Secretariat
- Prof Angela O'Hagan, Chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission and outgoing Chair of the UK NPM Scotland Subgroup
- Rosemary Agnew, Member of the Scottish Human Rights Commission and incoming Chair of the UK NPM Scotland Subgroup.

Panel Chair

- Audrey Nicoll, MSP and Convenor of the Criminal Justice Committee

Panellists

- Sara Snell, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, HMIPS
- Ray Jones, Lead Inspector, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland
- Cathy Asante, Senior Legal Officer, Scottish Human Rights Commission
- Chelsea Keenan, Secretariat Officer (Scotland), UK NPM

External Contributors

- Dr Hannah Graham, Scottish Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission, University of Stirling, Criminology
- Joe Smith, Next Chapter Scotland (representing lived experience)
- James Thompson, Inspector, Healthcare Improvement Scotland
- Gemma Fraser, Community Justice Scotland

Attendees from: SCCJR, Care Inspectorate, COPFS, SPS, HMIPS, Scottish Government, Police Scotland, Families Outside, UK NPM, SHRC, Scottish Parliament.

Panel questions

1. What are the biggest systemic challenges in Scotland in places where people are deprived of their liberty? What is preventing them from being resolved?
2. What is the impact of these issues — who is most affected, and are certain groups disproportionately impacted?
3. What needs to be done to root out these issues — and where does responsibility sit for delivering that change?
4. What is being done, what progress has been made, and what evidence do we have that things are improving?
5. Expert contributors: What does good look like in practice - and what needs to change, either operationally or at policy level, to make that the norm?
6. Duty bearers: What are the trenchant concerns/issues that they've heard, what are the challenges in addressing those concerns and issues? Key takeaways from the session.