



16 April 2012

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**NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE 00:01, WEDNESDAY, 18 APRIL 2012**

### **HMYOI COOKHAM WOOD – SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS**

Staff at HMYOI Cookham Wood should be commended for the progress they are making, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an announced inspection of the young offender institution in Kent.

At HMYOI Cookham Wood's last inspection in 2009, inspectors described the establishment as frightening and unsafe. In 2010, inspectors noted improvements, but characterised the establishment as off the critical list but still needing intensive care. This inspection found that Cookham Wood was continuing to make good progress and that outcomes for young people were all now reasonably good across our four tests of a healthy prison: safety, respect, purposeful activity and resettlement.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- young people felt safer than during the last inspection;
- staff were much more confident in using violence reduction and behaviour management procedures, including mediation, and the use of force was reducing;
- developments in the Phoenix Unit, a facility for the most disruptive, had progressed well;
- although accommodation was far from ideal, wings were cleaner and standards were better;

- the quality of relationships between young people and staff were good;
- some innovative local training was developing staff understanding of, and skills working with, young people;
- health care, and particularly mental health care, was much improved;
- most young people had a reasonable amount of time out of cell;
- access to education and training was good;
- resettlement work was improving, and arrangements were generally based on effective needs analysis and sound training planning; and
- the establishment had developed a consortium with local authorities aimed at the promotion of training and employment and had appointed a youth worker, linked to the community, to support social development.

However, inspectors were concerned to find that:

- safeguarding and child protection arrangements were robust, but would have benefited from greater engagement by the local authority;
- despite greater staff confidence in tackling violence, there was more to do and the number of violence and antisocial incidents remained high;
- there was more scope to develop progression opportunities in learning; and
- there was a need for better coordinated care planning for young people with substance misuse issues and for those moving to the adult estate.

Nick Hardwick said:

“This is a very encouraging report. Cookham Wood has come a long way in three years. There is no room for complacency and this report identified improvements that are still required in most areas of the establishment. However, Cookham Wood is well led and has a

renewed sense of confidence. The governor and her staff should be commended for what they have achieved so far.”

Michael Spurr, Chief Executive Officer of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), said:

"This is a very positive report that recognises significant progress and commends the good work that staff at Cookham Wood are doing to meet the needs of the young people in their care.

“The Governor and her staff have worked tirelessly to achieve the improvements recorded and will continue to focus on developing a safe, purposeful and constructive regime to support successful rehabilitation.”

ENDS

**Notes to Editors:**

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 18 April 2012 at [http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi?result\\_33497\\_result\\_page=C](http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi?result_33497_result_page=C)
2. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is an independent inspectorate, inspecting places of detention to report on conditions and treatment, and promote positive outcomes for those detained and the public.
3. This announced inspection was carried out from 14-18 November 2011.
4. HMYOI Cookham Wood is young offender institution for male, sentenced and remanded young people aged 15 to 18.
5. Please contact Jane Parsons in HMI Prisons Press Office on 0207 035 2123 or 07880 787452 if you would like more information or to request an interview with Nick Hardwick.