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**HMP DURHAM – SOME IMPROVEMENTS,
BUT MORE WORK NEEDED TO TACKLE DRUGS**

HMP Durham needed to tackle the availability of drugs, though it had seen some improvements in other areas, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an announced inspection of the local north east jail.

Recent inspections of Durham prison have identified slow progress against a backdrop of some significant concerns, and this inspection found a similar pattern. At the time of this inspection, Durham was one of the prisons selected for market testing – and the prison's attention was focused on preparing for that next significant milestone in its almost 200-year history.

Inspectors were concerned to find that:

- one in five prisoners tested positive in random drug tests, more than a third said it was easy to get drugs in the prison and 13% of prisoners said they have developed a drug problem while they were there;
- the availability of drugs was a significant cause of bullying in the prison and there was a lack of rigour in tackling the problem;
- the prison was not sufficiently safe, with around 110 violent incidents a month and ineffective measures to address the behaviour of perpetrators;

- prisoners spent between 16 and 20 hours locked in their cells each day, and a third of prisoners were locked up during the working day;
- the prison was overcrowded and was operating at 50% over the number it was intended to hold, so many prisoners shared cells designated for one, with unscreened toilets and one chair;
- the prison had not identified the needs of the young adults it held and did not have any strategy to meet them; and
- efforts to reduce the risk that prisoners would reoffend after release were too often seen as the responsibility of resettlement staff alone, whereas a “whole prison” approach was needed where all staff saw it as part of their job to contribute.

However, inspectors were pleased to find that:

- the use of force was not excessive;
- there had been marked improvements in learning and skills, with increased provision and some good new facilities, meaning there were now sufficient activity places to meet the needs of the population;
- staff-prisoner relationships were reasonable, although less so for the young adults who made up 10% of the population;
- the range of mental health services was developing positively; and
- resettlement was improving, and the prison had recently begun promising work to identify and meet the resettlements needs of the many remand and short-term prisoners held.

Nick Hardwick said:

“HMP Durham presents a mixed picture. It has improved and some of the developments and new services it has in progress – in resettlement and purposeful activity for instance – are very promising. However, there are some areas, such as combating the supply of drugs, making

sure prisoners get to activities, addressing diversity issues and taking a whole prison approach to resettlement, that we did not detect were being addressed with sufficient vigour.”

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

“Durham is currently subject to a competition process and major refurbishment, and I’m pleased that the Chief Inspector records that it continues to improve particularly in resettlement and learning and skills. I accept that there is more to do, especially with regard to drugs, and the Governor and his staff will focus on the areas identified for further improvement.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 17 April 2012 at http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi?result_33497_result_page=D
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 3-7 October 2011.
4. HMP Durham is a category B local establishment for adult and young adult male prisoners and serves the courts of Durham, Tyneside and Cumbria.
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.