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**HMP/YOI HIGH DOWN – SOLID STRENGTHS
BUT MORE ACTIVITY NEEDED FOR PRISONERS**

High Down provides some outstanding work and training opportunities for some prisoners but too few prisoners were involved and the prison needed a greater focus on the needs of some groups, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an announced inspection of the Surrey local jail.

HMP/YOI High Down is a prison on the site of an old asylum which closed in the 1980s. Almost 25 years later, the prison's mental health team has a caseload of about 120 patients. High Down faced the typically needy and challenging population of a local prison and did a good job of keeping most of those it held safe.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- there were good induction arrangements and care for those at risk of self-harm was generally satisfactory;
- for most prisoners, the environment was decent and relationships with staff were good;
- health care was excellent;
- 'The Clink' restaurant provided excellent training opportunities for some and served high-class cuisine to the public; and

- resettlement was solid, with good offender management, and good work to address finding accommodation, training, jobs and help with drug and alcohol issues on release.

However, inspectors had some concerns:

- much activity for prisoners was part-time, many prisoners were under-employed with a third locked in their cells during the working part of the day, and some classes and workshops were only two-thirds full;
- black and minority ethnic, disabled, young adults and foreign national prisoners felt significantly less safe than the population as a whole;
- provision for foreign national prisoners was uncoordinated and too many disabled and older prisoners did not receive the practical support they needed; and
- there was no specific strategy to address the needs of young adults, who were disproportionately represented in the use of force against them, and had insufficient access to vocational training.

Nick Hardwick said:

“Two themes emerged from the inspection. First, provision should be improved for prisoners whose needs differ from the population as a whole – particularly because of their age, disability or nationality. Second, while the prison provides outstanding training activities for some, too many prisoners spend too much time doing nothing. However, for most of the prisoners it holds, High Down provides a safe and decent environment and practical support to help those returning to the community to live useful and law-abiding lives. These strengths provide a solid platform on which to address the work still to do.”

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

"This is a positive report and I am pleased the Chief inspector has highlighted the good work High Down does with its prisoners. It is

pleasing to see that areas such as self-harm management, staff-prisoner relationships, health care, The Clink restaurant and resettlement provision are praised here.

"The Governor and his staff will work hard to address areas where improvements are necessary, such as diversity and the range of activity provision, but I would agree with the Chief Inspector that the prison has several strengths on which to build."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 5 January 2012 at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi-inspections/index.htm>
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 18-22 July 2011.
4. HMP/YOI High Down is a category B local male prison and young offender institution.
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.