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### **HMYOI ASHFIELD – PROGRESS IN SOME AREAS**

HMYOI Ashfield had made progress in some important areas despite a significant increase in the population, but some safety issues needed attention, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of a short follow-up inspection of the young offender institution near Bristol.

HMYOI Ashfield's last inspection in May 2010 reported that outcomes for young people were good against our healthy prison tests of safety, purposeful activity and resettlement, and reasonably good regarding respect. The establishment was only half full at the time of the 2010 inspection. The population had increased by 50% at this inspection and young people reported feeling less safe. Some problems which impacted on safety were not necessarily within the control of the establishment. In common with other recent inspections, there were lengthy waits at court and serious problems with late arrivals of court vehicles. Significant efforts had been made to involve the local safeguarding children board in child protection at Ashfield, but a draft agreement had not been implemented.

Inspectors were, however, pleased to find that:

- bullying was tackled robustly and the safeguarding team provided good support to victims of bullying and young people who self-harmed;
- there had been a drive to decrease the use of adjudications in favour of less formal procedures, with some success;

- the refurbishment progress had resulted in some improvements to cells;
- work with foreign nationals had improved, while young people with learning disabilities had a good level of support;
- health services were excellent;
- good overall progress had been made in learning and skills;
- the care and management of looked-after children had improved, and the role of the family support worker had developed well; and
- substance use services were good.

Inspectors had some other concerns:

- residential staff needed a clearer role in the day-to-day support of young people;
- despite good efforts by the establishment to provide training, it remained the case that some staff lacked confidence in challenging poor behaviour;
- governance of the use of single separation and strip-searching was inadequate and incidents of strip-searching were high;
- incidents of use of force had increased significantly, though governance was thorough; and
- personal officer work was variable.

Nick Hardwick said:

“This report charts sufficient progress against recommendations in three of our four healthy prison tests: respect, purposeful activity and resettlement, which is commendable in the light of the significant increase in the population since the previous inspection. However, it is of concern that some important recommendations in relation to safety had not been met and young people reported feeling less safe and less

well supported. Following the contraction in the number of establishments for children and young people under 18, it is likely that the current situation, operating at or near full capacity, will continue. The need to ensure safeguarding and behaviour management procedures are operating well will be of greater importance than ever.”

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

“The Chief Inspector acknowledges that Ashfield has made progress in some important areas despite a significant increase in its population since the last inspection. I am pleased that recognition has been given to the work that has been put in to tackling bullying and supporting young people who self-harm in the prison, but I accept that further work needs to be done to create a safer environment.”

ENDS

**Notes to Editors:**

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 17 February 2012 at [www.justice.gov.uk/inspectors/hmi-prisons](http://www.justice.gov.uk/inspectors/hmi-prisons)
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 unannounced short follow-up inspection was carried out from 11-13 October 2011.
4. HMYOI Ashfield is a young offender institution for sentenced and remand male young people aged between 15 and 18, serving courts from West Wales to London. It is run by Serco.
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.