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### **HMP LONG LARTIN – REASONABLY GOOD, BUT SOME CONCERNS**

Long Lartin successfully holds some of the most challenging prisoners in the system, but there were a number of significant concerns, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced follow-up inspection of the high security Worcestershire jail.

This follow-up inspection found HMP Long Lartin had sustained reasonably good outcomes for most prisoners in most areas. The prison was divided into two parts. The older wings held prisoners who were vulnerable because of the nature of their offence, who could not cope with the main prison or who needed protection.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- most prisoners in the main prison felt safe;
- there were relatively few violent incidents, (but those that did occur were often serious);
- the use of force appeared proportionate and de-escalation techniques were well used;
- most prisoners on the vulnerable prisoner wings felt staff treated them with respect;
- health care was good and well organised; and

- purposeful activity was of reasonable quantity and quality.

However, inspectors were concerned to find that:

- a high proportion of prisoners on the vulnerable prisoner wings said they did not feel safe;
- the supervision of and efforts to address bullying and violent behaviour were not rigorous enough;
- too often, the few prisoners subject to self-harm prevention procedures were held in the segregation unit, which had a limited regime, staff who often appeared disinterested and a grim 'exercise yard';
- staff relationships with mainstream prisoners appeared mixed and too many staff appeared distant and unapproachable;
- the vulnerable prisoner wings had a night sanitation system, which amounted to slopping out;
- the prison needed more help from the Prison Service nationally to work successfully with around a quarter of prisoners who were Muslim; and
- although a good offender management strategy and procedures were in place, some offender supervisors lacked the training, experience and supervision and time to carry out their duties effectively.

Nick Hardwick said:

"For most prisoners, most of the time, Long Lartin provided a reasonably safe and decent environment with sufficient purposeful activity and work to reduce the risk that they would reoffend on their eventual release. Some aspects of the prison, such as health care, were very good. However other aspects – the segregation unit and slopping out – were unacceptably poor. The contrasts in the perceptions of vulnerable and mainstream prisoners were striking. The fears of vulnerable prisoners for their safety need to be taken seriously,

understood and addressed, as do mainstream prisoners' concerns about the way they are treated.”

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

“I am pleased that the Chief Inspector recognises that the outcomes for prisoners at Long Lartin are reasonably good against the Inspectorate's four criteria for a healthy prison: safety; respect; purposeful activity; and, the resettlement of prisoners. There is more to do and the Governor and his staff will continue to work on those areas highlighted for improvement in the report while balancing the need for a constructive regime for a very challenging population with the core priority of security.

“I do not agree that the sanitation arrangements are unacceptable. The system is designed so that prisoners have access to appropriate sanitation at night and should not have to routinely ‘slop out’.”

ENDS

**Notes to Editors:**

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 10 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 unannounced follow-up inspection was carried out from 17-26 August 2011.
4. 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.