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HMP NORWICH – SOME CRITICISMS

HMP Norwich needed a period of management stability so that it could make improvements, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced inspection of the local jail in Norfolk.

HMP Norwich, on three adjacent sites, is a large and complex prison and poses a significant management challenge. At its previous inspection in 2010, inspectors found the prison was improving and beginning to clarify its role and purpose. This inspection found that Norwich was better than it has been, but needed focus to provide impetus and the opportunity to realise planned improvements.

Inspectors were concerned to find that:

- the prison appeared less safe than at its last inspection;
- the induction of vulnerable prisoners was inadequate and there was limited supervision by staff on some wings;
- the number of incidents of self-harm was high, and support for those in crisis and day-to-day care was limited;
- high levels of use of force and special accommodation were evident and the segregation unit was poor;

- the standard of accommodation was mixed across the three sites, and many cells and communal areas were poor;
- progress in learning and skills provision was insufficient and too slow, although there were well developed plans to improve quantity, quality and organisation of purposeful activity;
- unemployment was still too high – around 50% on the reception site – yet not all the regime activity places were fully utilised, though it was better on the Local Discharge Unit and at Britannia House; and
- access to offending behaviour work was limited.

However, inspectors were pleased to find that:

- the situation for young adult prisoners had improved and the outcomes they experienced were now comparable with adult prisoners;
- staff-prisoner relationships were reasonable;
- work on diversity had improved, though more needed to be done;
- health care was improving and mental health support was now good; and
- resettlement work remained solid and well managed, with robust public protection arrangements.

Nick Hardwick said:

“Overall this is a critical report. Norwich is a difficult prison to manage but we were encouraged that the management team seemed to have a good grasp of the challenges they faced, although progress needed to be maintained and in some areas speeded up. Meaningful plans were in place and there was optimism among managers that they could take the prison forward. We shared their optimism.”

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

"The Chief Inspector acknowledges that Norwich is a complex prison; that it has improved since the last Inspection; and that there are credible plans in place to maintain and accelerate progress.

"The Governor and his senior team are determined to deliver further improvement, and I am confident they will do so."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 13 June 2012 at http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi?result_33497_result_page=N
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 full follow-up inspection was carried out from 11-20 January 2012.
4. HMP Norfolk is a local prison accommodating male adult and young adult category B, C and D prisoners.
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.