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020 7035 2123

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM PUBLISHES ANNUAL REPORT
INTO STATE OF UK DETENTION: PROGRESS MADE**

The second annual report of the UK's National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) is published today, giving an overview of the state of detention in prisons, police custody, children's secure accommodation, immigration, military and mental health detention.

The NPM is made up of 18 independent bodies and co-ordinated by HM Inspectorate of Prisons. It was established in 2009 by the UK government to meet its UN treaty obligations regarding the treatment of anyone held in any form of custody. The NPM should have the right to regularly inspect all places of detention for the purpose of monitoring the treatment and conditions of detainees, with the clear purpose of preventing ill treatment of anyone deprived of their liberty. This report summarises the activities of those members.

Our last report recommended that the government should identify which places of detention are not subject to independent visits by the NPM and ensure that those gaps in protection are addressed. This recommendation was accepted. In future court cells in England and Wales will be subject to inspection by HMI Prisons and discussions are underway regarding the inspection of service custody facilities, (known as guardhouses), operated by the British military. As this report was being prepared for publication we were

pleased to learn that custody visitors in Scotland were being placed on a statutory footing.

The following year will see the NPM members continue to share their expertise and experience of visiting places of detention and explore issues, such as the use of restraint, which arise across different types of detention.

On behalf of the 18 members of the UK NPM, Chief Inspector of Prisons Nick Hardwick said:

“For detainees removed from public scrutiny in a prison or police cell, a secure hospital ward or juvenile facility, independent preventive inspection is particularly important. The nature of those held, and the fact that the work of the institution takes place out of sight, creates the conditions in which it is all too easy for abuse to take place. However, the greatest risk is the effect those conditions create. Away from public scrutiny, it is all too easy for even well intentioned staff to become accepting of standards that in any other setting would be unacceptable. We hope this report helps to provide an overview of the state of detention in the UK and our efforts to prevent ill-treatment.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the annual report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 8 February 2012 at www.justice.gov.uk/inspectorates/hmi-prisons
2. The UK's National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) was established in March 2009 under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). A United Nations (UN) treaty, OPCAT was ratified by the UK in 2003. OPCAT requires the UK to have in place a 'national preventive mechanism' to visit all places of detention and monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees.
3. The NPM consists of 18 existing bodies throughout the UK, which are independent and have the right regularly to inspect all places of detention. It is coordinated by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and reports to the UN treaty body.
4. The 18 bodies who make up the NPM are:
England and Wales
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
Independent Monitoring Boards
Independent Custody Visiting Association
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

Care Quality Commission
Healthcare Inspectorate of Wales
Children's Commissioner for England
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales
Office for Standards in Education

Scotland

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland
Scottish Human Rights Commission
Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland
Care Commission (now Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland)

Northern Ireland

Independent Monitoring Boards
Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
Northern Ireland Policing Board Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.

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. For inquiries relating to Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI), please contact Jackie Logan at Carlton Baxter on 02890 325533. Lorraine Calvert is Press and PR Manager at the Northern Ireland Policy Board and can be contacted on 02890 408541 or 07801 738795. For inquiries relating to Scotland, please contact Jenifer Johnstone, Scottish Human Rights Commission, on 0131 240 2989. For inquiries relating to Wales, please contact Tracey Goode, Communications Manager/Rheolwr Cyfathrebu, Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) / Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru (AGGCC) by phone/ffon: 0300 062 8842.