



28 March 2011

020 7035 2123

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE 00.01, WEDNESDAY, 30 MARCH 2011

HMP BRONZEFIELD – DOING A DIFFICULT JOB WELL

HMP Bronzefield had created a positive and supportive environment for the needy and challenging women it holds, although health care was very poor, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced inspection of the women's prison in Middlesex.

There was a high level of self-harm, not untypical in a women's local prison. In the 12 months before the inspection, there had been more than seven incidents of self-harm a day, many involving tying ligatures. The prison also held a small number of 'restricted status' women, some of whom had severe personality disorders. The overall culture of the prison provided an appropriate and positive foundation to meet the requirements of most of the women it held.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- there was good support for women at risk of self-harm and suicide, and little bullying;
- induction arrangements were thorough and imaginative and provided a good introduction to the prison;
- staff-prisoner relationships were good, although too many of the prison custody officers were men;

- education, training and work opportunities were, on the whole, good and there was effective use of talented prisoners to support the less able in workshops;
- there was a strong focus on helping women maintain contact with their children and families, and an excellent mother and baby unit; and
- good individual work in other areas of resettlement.

However, inspectors had some concerns:

- the prison could not meet the needs of the small number of 'restricted status' women, and a national strategy for managing women with such complex demands was lacking;
- health care was, surprisingly, shockingly poor with an unnecessarily complicated appointment system, chaotic administration, inconsistent pharmacy services and no female GPs; and
- progress in implementing the national integrated drug treatment system was slow and hampered by staff shortages.

Nick Hardwick said:

“With the exception of health care, Bronzefield did a difficult job well. At the time of the inspection, that job was about to become more difficult as the prison had just been told about the savings it had to make in the coming years. The inspection showed how a number of good but often small pieces of work across the prison combined to create a positive and supportive environment to meet the needs of very vulnerable women. Many of these initiatives relied on the work of voluntary organisations. The challenge for the prison now is to ensure that funding constraints do not put that good work at risk.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 30 March 2011 at 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 full unannounced inspection was carried out from 13-22 October 2010.
4. HMP Bronzefield is a local closed women's prison holding restricted status, remand and short-term convicted prisoners.
5. HMP Bronzefield is privately run by Kalyx (formerly Sodexo Justice Services).
6. Please contact Jane Parsons in HMI Prisons Press Office on 0207 035 2123 or 07880 787452 from 0915 to 1415 Monday to Friday if you would like more information or to request an interview with Nick Hardwick.