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020 7035 2123

**HMP STOCKEN – REASONABLY SAFE,
BUT BETTER TRAINING PROVISION NEEDED**

Despite undergoing rapid expansion, HMP Stocken was, commendably, a reasonably safe place with a good focus on resettlement but it needed to improve vocational training for prisoners, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an announced inspection of the East Midlands training prison.

Stocken's population has grown steadily since it opened in 1985, when it housed 300 prisoners, to 825 at the time of this inspection. The prison is going through a demanding period of transition as it expands.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- self-harm issues were dealt with well, levels of violence were low and staff took a proactive approach to combat bullying;
- there had been notable success in reducing the availability of drugs;
- staff rarely resorted to the use of force;
- the quality of education was good;
- resettlement work had improved, with sound offender management;
- and

- indeterminate-sentenced prisoners and public protection were well managed.

However, inspectors had some concerns:

- although the quantity of purposeful activity was adequate, it was poorly managed and up to a quarter of prisoners were locked in their cells during the day;
- the quality of provision required improvement to increase vocational training and offer greater opportunity to develop employability skills;
- health care services had been seriously undermined by staffing shortfalls;
- although some positive staff-prisoner interactions were observed by inspectors, prisoners reported negatively about staff, which needed to be more fully investigated; and
- diversity provision was underdeveloped and the negative perceptions of black and minority ethnic, Muslim and foreign national prisoners needed to be addressed.

Nick Hardwick said:

“Stocken has been undergoing almost incessant expansion since it opened and this expansion has accelerated in recent years. Despite this, managers and staff have maintained an essentially safe and secure establishment, as well as improving resettlement provision.

“However, in other areas there has been less progress: health care was excessively stretched, staff-prisoner relationships and diversity required improvement, and a greater focus was needed on purposeful activity in what is after all a large training prison. It is to be hoped managers will soon have a period of stability in which to build on the prison’s strengths and address the weaknesses pointed to in this report.”

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

"I am pleased the Chief Inspector recognises that Stocken is a safe prison with improved resettlement provision, low levels of violence, low use of force by staff, and good quality education. The Governor and his staff will work to address the report's concerns over the quality of purposeful activity and vocational training, the under-staffing of healthcare, and concerns over diversity provision and staff-prisoner relationships.

"By improving its resettlement provision and providing good education, the prison is helping reduce the chance of reoffending, thereby protecting the public."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 15 April 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 announced inspection was carried out from 9-13 August 2010.
4. HMP Stocken is a category C training prison for adult males.
5. 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.