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**HMP MORTON HALL –
A COMMENDABLY SAFE AND PURPOSEFUL ENVIRONMENT**

HMP Morton Hall provided a safe environment for prisoners, with good vocational training and full employment, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced inspection of the Lincolnshire women's prison.

At its last inspection, Morton Hall was a safe place with plenty of purposeful activity. This inspection found an equally positive picture. The week after this inspection, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the UK Border Agency (UKBA) announced that Morton Hall was to be re-roled to become an immigration removal centre.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- levels of self-harm had fallen, there was little overt bullying and mediation was used effectively to defuse tensions;
- security was proportionate and staff rarely resorted to use of force;
- staff-prisoner relationships were generally positive, supported by an effective personal officer scheme;
- diversity was well managed and foreign nationals, who made up the majority of the population, were well supported;

- prisoners had plenty of time out of their cells and could access a wide range of purposeful activity, including good vocational training and education;
- there was full employment, and an increase in the amount of accreditation to support employment on release; and
- strategic management of resettlement had improved, and there was some useful support available to help women resettle on release.

However, inspectors did find that there was insufficient support for those with alcohol problems.

Nick Hardwick said:

“Managers and staff at Morton Hall are to be commended for maintaining the essentially safe and purposeful environment that we have previously applauded. This positive report, therefore, provides a suitable testament to this achievement as the establishment closes as a women’s prison. It is to be hoped that prisoners are relocated to equally positive environments and that the prison can make a smooth transition to its new function as an immigration removal centre.”

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

"This is a very positive report and I am pleased the Chief Inspector recognises that Morton Hall was a safe environment for female prisoners.

"The change of use to an immigration removal centre will provide UKBA with much needed spaces for immigration detainees.

“The Governor and his staff will continue to work hard to provide for the needs of Morton Hall's new population after the establishment opens in its revised role.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 28 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 unannounced short follow-up inspection was carried out from 4-6 January 2011.
4. HMP Morton Hall, near Lincoln, is a closed women's prison with a resettlement unit attached.
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.