



18 April 2011

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE 00.01 TUESDAY 19 APRIL 2011

**HMP SEND – IMPROVEMENTS IN SAFETY AND STABILITY,
BUT SOME WEAKNESSES REMAIN**

HMP Send was more settled and stable, but still had weaknesses which needed attention, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an announced inspection of the Surrey women's prison.

Many prisoners at Send are serving long sentences and the prison now has the largest group of women serving life sentences in the country. At its last inspection in 2008, inspectors were concerned that staffing problems, management change and an unsettled population had led to a serious deterioration in performance. This inspection found a more stable establishment, with some impressive aspects to the regime. However, there was scope for further improvement and a need to ensure sufficient senior management focus now that Send is managed jointly with HMP Downview, 20 miles away.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- most women reported feeling safe;
- those at risk of suicide were well supported, although rates of self-harm remained high;
- relationships between staff and prisoners were generally good, supported by an effective personal officer scheme;

- women had plenty of time out of cell and there was a wide range of activities available, including some impressive workshops;
- some life-sentenced prisoners were able to benefit from the excellent therapeutic community; and
- education was good.

However, inspectors were concerned to find that:

- while there was little violence, many women reported insidious low-level intimidation by other prisoners which needed addressing;
- there had been a large unexplained increase in the use of force by staff and there had been instances of inappropriate use of restraints on hospital escorts;
- prisoners complained about a small number of officers who had a disproportionately negative impact;
- there was not enough support for older and disabled prisoners and more work was needed to address the negative perceptions of black and minority ethnic women;
- the growth in life- and other indeterminate-sentenced prisoners appears not to have been adequately planned; and
- support to maintain family contacts was underdeveloped for a prison housing so many mothers.

Nick Hardwick said:

“Send had improved since our last visit, particularly in terms of safety and stability. There was also plenty of purposeful activity and some notable interventions to address offending behaviour. However, there was still a need for a better senior management grip on a number of remaining areas of weakness, including confronting low-level bullying, improving staff-prisoner relationships, addressing deficiencies in

healthcare, and focusing more fully on the needs of the large life-sentenced prisoner population.”

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

"The Chief Inspector recognises that Send has made significant improvements in safety and stability since its last inspection, helped by an improved range of purposeful activity and offending behaviour work. The Governor and staff have been working hard to address the concerns raised in the report, with a strong focus on reducing violence and antisocial behaviour.

"Enabling prisoners to have access to a range of activities and workshops reduces their chances of reoffending on release."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 19 April 2011 at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi-inspections>.
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 6-10 December 2010.
4. HMP Send is a closed adult female training prison in Surrey.
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.