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HMP PETERBOROUGH (MEN) – COMMENDABLE PROGRESS

The men's prison at HMP Peterborough had improved and was on an upward trajectory, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an announced inspection of the local Cambridgeshire jail.

HMP Peterborough separately holds male and female prisoners and is a Young Offenders Institution for women. The prison has recently been chosen as the first pilot for the government's 'payment by results' scheme funded by a social impact bond. The inspection was not an evaluation of the pilot, but created an opportunity to make some observations on how it was working.

Inspectors were pleased to find:

- the prison offered a generally safe environment, and measures to support prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm were very good;
- work to reduce both the supply of and demand for drugs was given appropriate priority;
- staff-prisoner relationships had much improved with a more developed personal officer scheme;
- time out of cell and the number of activity places were better than in most local prisons; and

- the social impact bond funded an impressive range of resettlement services for men serving sentences of less than 12 months on a 'payments by results' basis and while the pilot was in its early stages, it looked promising. However, the pilot was not sufficiently integrated into the day to day work of the prison.

However, inspectors had some concerns:

- relatively high numbers of men said they felt unsafe, suggesting a need to develop further effective violence reduction and anti-bullying strategies;
- an unsuitable mix of prisoners on the first night and induction wing meant vulnerable prisoners spent too much time locked up;
- although health care was generally good, there were problems with the appointment system, leading to a high rate of non-attendance;
- there was still not enough activity to keep everyone occupied and, while the work training and education on offer was good, the range of qualification obtainable was limited; and
- there was little resettlement planning to meet the needs of men not included in the pilot, such as the significant proportion of unconvicted prisoners.

Nick Hardwick said:

"Overall, it is clear that Peterborough men's prison is an improving institution that has made commendable progress. The good environment and staff-prisoner relationships create the necessary foundation for further development.

The 'payment by results pilot' was in its early stages but certainly looked promising, and for the group of men eligible, provided the best reintegration support we have seen in a local prison. However, it was

hard to avoid the impression that this was an initiative 'hosted' by the prison rather than one that was integrated into its everyday work."

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

"I am pleased that the Chief Inspector has found that Peterborough men's prison has improved in a number of areas since the last inspection.

"I am confident that the Director and staff will work to address concerns raised over violence reduction, first night procedures, and purposeful activity to build upon the progress made so far.

"This will reduce the likelihood of reoffending and thereby protect the public."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 27 September 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 4-8 April 2011.
4. HMP Peterborough is a category B local prison separately holding male and female prisoners and a designated young offender institution (YOI) for female prisoners.
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.