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HMP HOLME HOUSE – REASONABLY GOOD

Holme House was a challenging prison to run, and the outcomes it delivered for prisoners were a real achievement, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced inspection of the local prison in Stockton-on-Tees.

The prison has expanded repeatedly to cope with the growing prison population, and a building programme was in progress during the inspection.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- measures to prevent suicide and self-harm were mainly good;
- many staff took obvious pride in their work, and the induction staff were committed and enthusiastic;
- some facilities were excellent and the latest phase of buildings could further enhance resettlement and purposeful activity programmes;
- time out of cell was better than many similar prisons, and training and education was of a good quality; and
- resettlement activities were sound and the prison had developed excellent and innovative community links.

Inspectors were, however, concerned to find that:

- drugs were a major issue, despite the prison tackling this robustly, and some violence was drug-related;
- the recently introduced national integrated drug treatment system needed improved staffing and better co-ordination;
- vulnerable prisoners felt much less safe than the population as a whole and not all violent incidents were identified and investigated;
- staff-prisoner relationships were inconsistent, ranging from excellent to non-existent; and
- there was inadequate care planning and recording of emergency evacuation plans for prisoners with disabilities and prison officers refused to push prisoners in wheelchairs.

Nick Hardwick said:

“Despite these concerns, Holme House delivered reasonably good outcomes in challenging circumstances for most prisoners. Most were kept safely and securely in decent conditions and were helped to reduce their risk of reoffending after release. However, a small minority of more vulnerable prisoners were not dealt with as positively, and the supply of illegal drugs in the prison is a threat that needs continued efforts to be tackled effectively.”

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

"I am pleased the Chief Inspector has recognised the positive outcomes HMP Holme House is delivering for prisoners and the pride that staff take in their work. The good work in preventing suicide and self-harm against a challenging background of building work at the establishment is testament to these efforts. It is also good to note the comments on resettlement and reducing reoffending.

"I am confident that the Governor and his team will continue to build on this positive report."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 9 February 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 19-23 July 2010.
4. HMP Holme House is a category B local prison holding adult male remand and convicted prisoners and a limited number of unsentenced young offenders.
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.