

WELLINGBOROUGH: IMPROVING BUT SOME WEAKNESSES REMAIN

HMP Wellingborough is an improving prison but further work is needed, particularly on resettlement, said Anne Owers, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced follow-up inspection of the training prison.

The report records improvements, particularly in safety (where 20 out of 24 recommendations in the previous inspection had been achieved) and in the management of race relations. There had also been considerable improvements in the quality and management of activity, with activity places for all prisoners and opportunities for vocational training.

Disappointingly, there had been little measurable progress in the area of resettlement; an essential task for a prison preparing prisoners for return to the community. Sentence planning had deteriorated, life-sentenced prisoner management remained weak, and the drug strategy was under-developed.

The report identified other weaknesses needing to be addressed, such as work with foreign nationals, better communication with black and minority ethnic prisoners, and work on the new violence reduction strategy.

Anne Owers said:

“Wellingborough has made significant progress. It now needs to focus on the weak areas we have identified, in particular resettlement, where we will expect to see further progress when we next inspect.”

Phil Wheatley, Director General of the Prison Service, said:

"I acknowledge that Wellingborough needs to focus more on its resettlement function. A new community links manager has joined the prison since the inspection and will lead on developing stronger ties with local employers. The prison's regime is also being reviewed, with an emphasis on improving purposeful activity.

"The Violence Reduction Strategy at Wellingborough, which incorporates the anti-bullying procedures, is being strengthened while work is in hand to improve the services provided to foreign national prisoners."

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The unannounced inspection of HMP Wellingborough took place between 3-5 May 2005.
2. Wellingborough is a category C training prison holding adult males serving 18 months and above.
3. HM Prisons Inspectorate reports and releases are available at <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprisons>.
4. For an electronic copy of the report, please call 020 7035 3852.