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020 3334 3527

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**HMYOI ASHFIELD – CONTINUED PROGRESS COMMENDED**

Ashfield Young Offenders Institution has continued to make progress, in spite of a volatile population, said Dame Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing an unannounced short follow-up inspection of the establishment near Bristol.

Ashfield's first three years were extremely troubled. However, since then inspections have chronicled rapid and sustained improvement. This inspection found that previous performance in safety, respect and activities had been maintained, and there had been improvements in the establishment's resettlement work.

Inspectors found:

- Ashfield remained a largely safe place. Fewer young people than at comparator prisons said they had felt unsafe.
- Assaults and the use of force were high, though steps were being taken to address the underlying causes, using some innovative interventions. The role of the 'reorientation' unit was unclear.
- Relationships between staff and young people were appropriate, and the role of personal officers was unusually well developed. Procedures for managing race and diversity had improved, though the perceptions of black and minority ethnic young people remained particularly poor.
- Both healthcare and the support for young people with substance abuse problems had improved.
- The quantity and quality of purposeful activity for young people at Ashfield was very good. Education offered a broad curriculum, with specialist support for those with attention deficit and hyperactive disorder (ADHD).
- Resettlement had improved significantly, with improvements to both strategic management and the delivery of services. However, over a quarter of young people lived more than 100 miles away, so few families could attend planning review meetings.
- Support for young people serving long and indeterminate sentences remained inadequate.

**Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, said:**

“This is another positive inspection of Ashfield. Managers and staff had responded to weaknesses highlighted in previous reports, with some innovative approaches.

“Though relationships between staff and young people remained generally good, the high level of assaults and use of force bore witness to the difficulty of managing this volatile population safely in large establishments and units.

“Nevertheless, this report shows that Ashfield had been able to sustain and continue the progress it has made over the last six years.”

**Phil Wheatley, Director General of the National Offender Management Service, said:**

“This is a good report and the Director and staff should be commended for their work maintaining rapid and sustained improvement.

“I am pleased that the Chief Inspector has reported positively on the good Personal Officer work and significant improvement in resettlement despite the volatile population.

“The work that Ashfield does with the young people it holds means that the public are better protected. Constructive relations with prisoners, good purposeful activity and education all reduce the chances of re-offending.”

**Notes for Editors**

1. A copy of the full report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 1 April 2009 at <http://inspectrates.justice.gov.uk/hmiprisons>.
2. The announced full inspection of HMYOI Ashfield was carried out from 26 – 29 August 2008.
3. The last full inspection of HMYOI Ashfield took place in September 2006.
4. The operational capacity at HMYOI Ashfield is 400.
5. Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, is available for interview. If you would like to speak to her please contact Tom Hodson in the Press Office on 0203 334 3527.